

PS

1739

·G3





Class PS 1739

Book G 3

Copyright N^o

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.



Page of Cover

710
2.84

SURVIVAL COMEDY

BY RICHARD GERNER.



COMPLETE.

ERRATA.

N. B.—Stanza numbers run from beginning of canto. B stands for book, C for canto, S for stanza, P for page, and L for line of stanza. Punctuation not corrected.

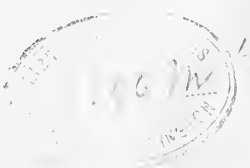
B.	C.	S.	L.	P.	B.	C.	S.	L.	P.
1	1	16	3	11— <i>Or</i> should read <i>Of</i> .	3	5	52	1	65— <i>kindness</i> should be <i>kindnesses</i> .
1	1	34	4	12— <i>it</i> " <i>brooks</i> .	3	5	72	3	61— <i>we</i> should be <i>was</i> .
1	1	37	4	12— <i>despised</i> should read <i>despised</i> .	3	6	77	2	62— <i>his</i> should read <i>their</i> .
1	1	46	4	12— <i>W't</i> into death I <i>grope</i> .	4	1	13	1	66— <i>woman</i> should be <i>women</i> .
1	1	54	3	13— <i>On</i> <i>schemers</i> <i>shame, disgrace and</i> <i>flight</i> .	4	1	20	3	66— <i>her</i> <i>mind's</i> <i>plea</i> <i>et</i> .
1	2	2	2	13— <i>On</i> the upturned <i>pale</i> <i>face</i> .	4	1	28	1	67— <i>love</i> should be <i>love</i> .
1	2	12	2	13— <i>With</i> should read <i>To</i> .	4	1	45	1	67— <i>The</i> should read <i>What</i> .
1	2	36	3	14— <i>disobed</i> should be <i>disobeyed</i> .	4	1	56	1	68— <i>The</i> <i>women</i> of <i>caste</i> <i>where</i> , &c.
1	3	36	1	16— <i>understand</i> should be <i>understood</i> .	4	1	64	2	68— <i>virtue</i> should read <i>hon</i> <i>st</i> .
1	4	12	4	16— <i>be</i> should read <i>me</i> .	4	1	131	2	71— <i>That</i> <i>bulks</i> <i>me</i> <i>so</i> <i>soft</i> <i>asleep</i> .
2	1	49	1	24— <i>Striking</i> should be <i>Shrieking</i> .	4	2	52	2	73— <i>guest</i> should be <i>guest</i> .
2	1	51	3	24— <i>into</i> should be <i>updo</i> .	4	2	60	3	73— <i>led</i> should be <i>lead</i> .
2	1	57	2	24— <i>struck</i> should be <i>struck</i> .	4	2	77	3	74— <i>The</i> <i>look</i> <i>that</i> <i>upon</i> <i>it</i> <i>Haz</i> <i>on</i> <i>cast</i> .
2	1	78	3	25— <i>reproches</i> should be <i>reproaches</i> .	4	3	91	1	78— <i>You</i> <i>quoted</i> <i>against</i> <i>me</i> <i>what</i> <i>you</i> <i>d</i> <i>find</i> .
2	2	3	1	25— <i>over</i> should read <i>above</i> .	4	3	110	3	78— <i>in</i> should be <i>on</i> .
2	2	7	2	25— <i>their</i> should be <i>there</i> .	4	4	55	1	81— <i>these</i> should read <i>this</i> .
2	2	8	1	25— <i>everlasting</i> should be <i>overlasting</i> .	4	4	76	1	82— <i>assumed</i> should read <i>took</i> .
2	3	54	1	30— <i>plans</i> should be <i>plains</i> .	4	4	93	1	82— <i>delay</i> should be <i>detail</i> .
2	4	4	4	32— <i>you</i> should be <i>yet</i> .	4	5	15	4	85— <i>I</i> should be <i>As</i> .
2	4	13	1	33— <i>spent</i> should be <i>spent</i> .	4	5	60	1	87— <i>Inferno</i> <i>had</i> <i>won</i> ! " <i>Huzza</i> , <i>huzza</i> !
2	4	38	3	34— <i>darkness</i> should read <i>starkness</i> .	5	1	96	2	94— <i>sing</i> should be <i>sings</i> .
2	4	55	3	34— <i>pollution</i> should be <i>pollution</i> .	5	1	111	2	95— <i>Huzza</i> <i>should</i> be <i>Huzza</i> .
2	5	25	3	37— <i>that</i> should be <i>that</i> .	5	2	20	3	96— <i>go</i> should read <i>take</i> <i>on</i> .
2	6	82	2	43— <i>yell</i> should be <i>hell</i> .	5	2	36	2	96— <i>filled</i> should be <i>fil'd</i> .
2	6	94	2	44— <i>to</i> should read <i>its</i> .	5	6	6	4	115— <i>shrink</i> should be <i>shirk</i> .
2	6	115	4	45— <i>Sir</i> , <i>the</i> <i>devil</i> <i>is</i> <i>a</i> <i>woman</i> ! "—	5	6	36	3	116— <i>When</i> <i>he</i> <i>in</i> <i>sorrow</i> <i>from</i> <i>them</i> <i>roved</i> .
3	1	11	4	46— <i>him</i> should go out.	5	6	39	4	116— <i>into</i> should be <i>into</i> .
3	3	57	2	54— <i>sulphur</i> should be <i>sulphur</i> .	5	6	51	3	117— <i>the</i> <i>Indians</i> <i>should</i> <i>read</i> <i>some</i> <i>strangers</i> .
3	4	3	1	55— <i>The</i> <i>t</i> <i>should</i> <i>have</i> <i>an</i> <i>i</i> <i>before</i> <i>it</i> .	5	6	51	4	117— <i>bring</i> <i>should</i> <i>read</i> <i>grow</i> .
3	5	5	1	58— <i>most</i> should read <i>not</i> .	5	6	90	3	118— <i>Britannia</i> <i>should</i> <i>be</i> <i>Britannia</i>
3	5	20	2	59— <i>outspoken</i> should read <i>outbroken</i> .	5	6	94	4	118— " " "
3	5	41	1	59— <i>First</i> <i>the</i> <i>should</i> <i>read</i> <i>to</i> .					

THE
INFERNAL COMEDY.

BY RICHARD GERNER.

33
ADVANCE EDITION.

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR
1881.



7

PS 1739
G 3

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1881, by
RICHARD GERNER,
In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington, D. C.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

	PAGE
PREFACE.....	5

BOOK I.—DARK DEATH.

CANTO I.—THE PAST.....	11
II.—THE DYING DUELLIST.....	13
III.—FAITH.....	14
IV.—THE FEAR OF DEATH.....	16
V.—REMORSE.....	17
VI.—AZRAEL.....	20

BOOK II.—THE INFERNAL REALMS.

CANTO I.—THE DREAM OF HELL.....	22
II.—THE REALITY FORESHADOWED.....	25
III.—THE UNSEEN UNIVERSE.....	28
IV.—THE EMPYREAL SHELL.....	32
V.—INFERNAL POLITICS.....	36
VI.—THE TORTURES OF THE DAMNED.....	40

BOOK III.—THE INFERNAL HISTORY.

CANTO I.—THE CHARACTER OF THE BLESSED.....	46
II.—THE THIRD TESTAMENT.....	49
III.—THE NEW GENESIS.....	52
IV.—AUTOCREATION.....	55
V.—THE TRUTH AT LAST.....	58
VI.—VIVE LE ROI!.....	62

BOOK IV.—THE CONQUEST OF HEAVEN.

CANTO I.—THE CALL TO ARMS.....	66
II.—LIGHT.....	71
III.—THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN.....	74
IV.—A DIVINE FIEND.....	79
V.—THE INFERNAL VICTORY.....	84
VI.—HELL-FIRE.....	87

BOOK V.—THE DAWN OF REASON.

CANTO I.—THE SECOND COMING.....	91
II.—THE HISTORY OF A FAITH.....	95
III.—THE SHATTERED CROSS.....	99
IV.—THE PORTENT OF DESTRUCTION.....	104
V.—THE DOCTRINE OF HELL.....	110
VI.—THE RETURN TO NOTHING.....	115



DEDICATED TO COMMON SENSE.

~ P R E F A C E . ~

In the name of all that is sensible and reasonable, the present poetical work was designed and stands now written. Its author, in making his bow to the public, unhesitatingly announces himself as uncompromisingly antagonistic to all the principles espoused by and included in the religious creeds of all nations. He is an atheist from first to last, in all the articles of his philosophy. He discards blind faith as unworthy of the intelligent thinker, admits no premise advanced by the disciples of any form of religion, and accepts no circumstance of time and place not scientifically demonstrated or, at least, supported by the dictates of reason and common sense. His only religion is the religion of humanity and the pursuit of real knowledge. He desires to wound nobody's feeling, but, in the exercise of his conscientiousness, cannot stop to consider where the chips fall when he hews to the line. He cannot be hampered with conventionalities and modern fashions. He must be true to his intelligence at all times. In this spirit he appears before the reader, neither for the purpose of amusing, offending, instructing, dictating or preaching, but imbued with the earnest desire to impress the significance of his studies and beliefs upon such as shall display the patience of giving him their attention.

Before entering upon the subject of the work at hand, the author, acting upon the belief that a reader is desirous of knowing something of the personality of a writer before beginning the perusal of his writings, begs to be permitted to say something about himself by way of an introduction of his character to the reader, thinking that his motives may thereby be the better understood, and many obscure points in the following poem placed in a clearer light. He trusts that he may be acquitted of unworthy motives in so doing, such as the parade of his vanity or the desire of notoriety at any price.

Of foreign birth, an American by education, he was at an early age given opportunities to exercise a deep-rooted desire to make his mark in the world with his pen, and now, at the age of twenty-four, after a not uneventful literary career, he comes forward with the first work of any magnitude, trembling with mingled hopes and fears. The reading of his boyhood was extensive and rambling, not always of the best, and often inimical to his natural tendencies. This last remark refers to the period spent, or rather misspent, in

the pursuit of a technical education which left vestiges of acquirement on the day of his graduation, only to be effaced entirely by the first return to pure literature as a pastime and an ambition. Romantic and historical fiction has ever been his favorite and almost uninterrupted indulgence, filling his mind with vistas of the impossible and the unscientifically speculative. The effects of this, he is afraid, are only too apparent in the present work, but he consoles himself with the thought that they are not entirely foreign to that work's nature. He is but little acquainted with the literatures of nations, viewed from a scholar's standard of knowledge, but sufficiently so to have invested the work at hand with all required references to past writings on the subject under consideration, and insufficiently so as to have invested it with any voluntary or involuntary imitative features. His knowledge of theology is not the result of midnight oil inquiry, but of an extended and intimate association with professing Christians, to whose teachings he has been an attentive and wondering listener. Then, too, his own religious education in tender years has not been neglected, and he has only deserted the banner of faith after a long and earnest examination of its tenets, and the realization of its utter philosophical worthlessness. All the prominent faiths have been in turn examined and, after more or less hesitation, discarded, the fundamental Buddhist creed being the last on the list. He is now convinced that faith is not an inseparable attribute to humankind, but rather a manner of intellectual vice, indulged in at the expense of the mental ennoblement of nations. He is prepared to say that education will, at a not very late day, obliterate the remaining existence of creeds which are gradually dwindling into insignificance and ultimate oblivion. It may be necessary to add, in the summing up of his individual traits, that the English tongue was not that of his childhood, and that it was only acquired in boyhood after another language's fashions had left its unextinguishable marks upon his style. With this brief explanation of his natural propensities, the critic will be prepared to deal with their emanations, and particularly with the work now before him.

The autobiographer has made reference to a not uneventful literary career. This will seem, to say the least, surprising to the ninety-nine hundredths of the readers of this work, who have

never before heard his name mentioned. In justice to himself, he must therefore beg the reader to be made acquainted with a condensed review of the ten years preceding the presentation hereof. At the age of fourteen, after a number of abortive attempts to shine in the galaxy of the world's literary lights, which attempts are happily lost to posterity together with the boyish, and therefore pardonable, ambition which incited them, he became familiar with and an humble member of, an institution with which the public at large is but little acquainted: the fraternity of American amateur journalists consisting of an aggregation of boys and youths, and, it may be added, girls and young ladies, scattered throughout the States, who make it a pleasure to edit and publish a number of mostly diminutive and mostly monthly journals, either printed by themselves or, for such as can afford it, by professional printers, and contributed to by a number of amateur authors. This fraternity is styled *Amateurdom*: "dom" for short. Into the ranks of these amateur authors the writer succeeded in working himself, by dint of the concoction of a large number of wonderful and fearful sensational creations of a youthful mind poisoned by the pernicious influence of contributors to the weekly juvenile press. Gradually, a reformation in the demand for topics brought the amateur authors to their senses, and the writer fell from his estate and unenviable notoriety in the "dom" until, by repeated and persistent effort, he managed to regain his prestige by the production of a number of more serious works, including many essays and a few poems. A single success in the poetical line finally determined him to try his fortune in that direction; and, discarding prose for the time being, he set to work at a series of poems, some of which have been as successful as others have failed ignominiously. Later on, he dabbled in Eastern romances, published in the *Danbury News*, until, finally, he forsook all other literary work in order to be able to devote himself exclusively to the composition of the appended work. His career as an amateur author came to an end, brought on by political causes in which he was unsuccessful; his connection with the "dom" thereby ceased, and all he has to remember it by is the file of his contributions to its journals, and a handsome farewell testimonial.

The signal poetical success incidentally above mentioned was "Terrible Snow," probably better known to the reading public than its author, since it has had the run of the press and been received into collections of standard verse. Modeled on the plan of "Beautiful Snow," but opposed to it in sentiment, it made a way of its own. Its first publication marks the turn to professional literature in the author's career, as well as his decided preference for poetical writing, and since then, numerous verses, of all quality and length, have been credited to his name by way of prominent journals, especially by the *New York Commercial Advertiser*.

The reader is now in a measure prepared to

hear what the author has to say, by way of introduction, of the subject and subject-matter of these pages. Some explanation is indubitably necessary since immaturity of conceptive powers and nonfluency of diction have prevented the author from doing that justice to the topic involved which it unquestionably deserves.

The present poem is not a comedy in the modern acceptance of that word, at any rate not in its literary form. It is so designated because of the title of Dante's sublime creation. It is more a comedy than "The Divine Comedy" is, since that work is, in a measure, an earnest and an honest one. The author of "The Divine Comedy" believed what he wrote, at least in his topic's fundamental aspects; the author of "The Infernal Comedy" believes nothing of the kind. In that respect, the latter work is a comedy in the broadest sense of the word. Its author believes in no heaven and no hell; his pictures of them are not intended to impress their existence upon the reader, but to point to a moral. Hence, "The Infernal Comedy" is neither a companion piece nor a reputation nor an imitation of nor a burlesque on, nor a comparison with, "The Divine Comedy."

The plan on which the Comedy before the reader is based, was not hit upon like a happy thought, but is the result of long and earnest contemplation. Its origin does not lie in Dante's work, as may be supposed, for the title came long after the work was begun, and before the author ever knew what Dante's work was all about. It grew rather out of a sense of vindictiveness toward the Christian religion. The original idea was to present a heaven and a hell as different from the Christian aspect of those localities as it was possible to conceive, and more in accordance with the well known burlesques on the same by French and German humorists. Indeed, when the work was begun, the author had but a very hazy conception of what he was going to do at all, and actually, in the midst of a settled purpose, turns deliberately about, ridicules what he has written and goes off in an entirely new direction. The fourth canto of the second book marks this transition. There his ideas became set and from that point the poem flows premeditatedly on to the end. The first book was originally written as a separate work, and it was only near its finish that the author bethought himself to use it as the first part of his long contemplated infernal work. The metre, it will be seen, changes with every book, the last being like the first; the author's first consideration in his choice of metre having been simplicity, even to childishness, so as to permit him to devote all that time to his topic which so many other ambitious versifiers expend upon clumsy stanzas and fanciful rhythmic combinations.

Now that the work is finished, and the author turns back to examine into the various emotions which animated him during its composition, and the manner in which those emotions have found vent, he finds it indispensable to prepare the

reader for what is coming by a psychological outline of his labors without beforehand destroying any interest in the work which it may own in a narrative sense.

Although "The Infernal Comedy" is the result of much speculation, it is not a speculative work. It does not seek to add to the literature of philosophical inquiry. It claims for its alleged scientific speculations no value whatever; these speculations are not intended to be farcical, but have earnest points in view. Thus, Queen Mepha's dissertation on the beginning of all things, which is the feature of the third book, is not a burlesque, but purposes to show that an intelligent thinker should rather build up for himself a partly or wholly fallacious conception of the mystery of creation and nature, to be partly or wholly corrected or substituted by other conceptions, by future studies, on a purely reasonable basis, than to dismiss the subject by accepting the idea of a Creator and conforming to a creed.

"The Infernal Comedy" is, in general, a picture of the hereafter from the aspect of the nineteenth century but does not admit of any kind of an hereafter. It is evolutionary in sympathy and rejects everything that is not in conformity with that doctrine. The purpose of the drawing of such a picture was, at heart, to throw ridicule on the existing orthodox conception of that state; more than that, to show that unknown things are not as strange as they are pictured by the fancy, and that everything is natural and familiar when but brought into contact with. And everywhere throughout the poem, it will be noticed, the spirit is rampant to abuse and confound orthodoxy. If that is a fault, and the work must be condemned on that account, the author refuses to save the work at the expense of lopping it of those traits. Indeed, he despairs of correcting its faults, since it bristles with such, look at it from whatever side you will. It is shambling, rambling, illogical, contradictory, rhetorically and grammatically incorrect, and offensive to the outward genius of a bigoted age. But the author claims for it that it is novel and unique. If his critics will echo him in that conceit, he is content; if not, it simply goes to show that he has overestimated its merits.

The work is very much in need of a charitable perusal, both in mercy to the thought involved and the execution exhibited. It was written in a hurry, at ragged intervals, in expectation of momentary disturbance. Too much space has been given to unimportant points and unnecessary philosophizing, and too little to really essential features. Thus, the conception of the location of hell presented in the fourth canto of the second book is poorly, insufficiently and timidly presented, and not emphasized until the fourth canto of the third book. The author therefore desires the readers to dwell on stanzas 34-38 of the fourth canto of the second book and fix the conception rigidly in his or her mind before going any further, until recurrence shall be had to it further on. (p. 56.) Much is didactic and monotonous

which might have been enlivened with fanciful and rhetorical graces if more severe labor had been expended on it. The author can but assure the reader that the second half of the work is better than the first, and beg him or her to endure the latter for the sake of the former.

Much delight has been manifested in the composition of the third and fourth books, since these gave the author full opportunity to find vent for long pent up cherished feelings and sentiments. He is frank enough to confess that he has personal and private motives to be malicious toward the professors of Christianity, and, in the pasquinade upon the story of Adam and Eve as given in the fifth canto of the third book, and the conquest of heaven as set forth in the fourth book, he does not hesitate to say that he has been intentionally aggressive and unsparing. But for all that he asserts that he has not been more severe with Christianity than its scientific and historical merits deserve, and has conscientiously written only his sincerest beliefs.

The author expects to be charged with immorality by fanatics and incensed religionists. In reply to this he has to say, beforehand, that "The Infernal Comedy" was not intended for the detection of prudes and children, nor for the general public, and its author does not propose to set up for a reformer of public morals. On the contrary he has attempted to show that the paraded morality of the Anglo-Saxons is a mockery, and that they need to be shocked by a glaring effrontery in the teeth of their code of morals in order to be brought to their senses. The author fondly hopes that "The Infernal Comedy" will do that for them.

On the whole, the author has no apologies to make for his opinions, sentiments and beliefs, invites no discussions and accepts no compromise. He presents no plea, advances no new theory or doctrine begging for examination and acceptance, does not desire any sympathy, and is prepared to regard the differently opinionated with indifference, and to treat such of them as propose to wax violent toward him, with scorn. As an aspirant for literary honors, he pleads for mercy and charity; as a thinker, he asks for nothing of the kind.

Returning to the work itself, the author feels bound to say a few words about the four principal characters introduced into the narrative of the poem.

The central figure and hero of the epic is the anti-Christ of "sacred" and "profane" history, by an ancient Hebraic designation known as Armillus, for further reference to whom the reader is referred to the encyclopedias. He has been here endowed with many of the author's personal traits, and been made the exponent of his opinions and sentiments. He is pictured as impressionable, dauntless and altogether human. He speaks for himself; his career constitutes the thread of the story.

Queen Mepha is the impersonation of womanhood as the author loves to picture a woman to

himself, and she is therefore the heroine. Her name is a brief effemination of Mephisto. She is the womanly counterpart of the hero, and is endowed with all the possible graces that can be consistently combined in a human being. The character is, of course, an idealization of an existing prototype.

Queen Diva is the personification of the Anglo-Saxon woman, beautiful as an angel, graceful as a sylph, but heartless, unnatural, fanatic, bigoted and narrow-minded, her intellect, heart and soul prostituted by the influence of a fiercely Christian training. The shrewd reader will at once imagine that he sees in this character the key to the mystery of the author's hatred toward the church, and he is not altogether wrong; but the author must warn him or her that he is not a proselyte from malice, but from conviction, and that circumstances have merely aggravated his natural repugnance toward the faith into bitter resentment. The author has known, seen and studied Diva in a living woman, but has of course welded her here to suit the purposes of his work, and he does not hesitate to say that he has placed Armillus in Diva's estimation where he himself has stood in that of the original. He thinks that, in general, an Anglo-Saxon woman is either a thoughtless fool or a fanatic fiend, and he demands the indictment of the established churches as the immediate cause of such a deplorable condition of things.

Carelta is a woman occupying the same position in the story of the poem that Haidee occupies in the elder Dumas' masterpiece, "The Count of Monte Christo," introduced for the purpose of rewarding the hero, after the manner of stage comedies, for all the trials and tribulations he has passed through; and as the present work has once come under the head of a comedy, its author deems it necessary to let the curtain, at the end of the story proper, fall on bliss. But for fear this may appear too conventional, he ends the poem itself in what Queen Mepha says everything has begun—in nothing. And as "The Infernal Comedy" is a part of everything, it is perforce obligatory upon its creator that it should end in nothing.

For the character of Carelta, and some of the incidents in the fifth book, the author is indebted to Wilkie Collins' charming but hastily dashed off novelette, "The Captain's Last Love," from which he has not hesitated to borrow, feeling that an imputation of plagiarism were ridiculous; as much charge Shakespeare of plagiarizing from Boccaccio, or Dryden from Aesop.

"The Infernal Comedy" contains much blasphemy, viewed from the Christian standpoint, and will call down upon its author's head the execration of the probably vast majority of its readers who have been taught to regard with feelings of veneration what the author holds up to scorn and derision. He has been told that in any other country but this, he would be imprisoned and punished for the creation and publication of sentiments held to be so atrocious, and he has been warned that even in the land of the free and the home of the brave, he will be fortunate to escape being prosecuted as a foul-mouthed blasphemer. The author is perfectly willing to take his chances, feeling that the nation which will tolerate Col. Robert G. Ingersoll, will also tolerate him. He flatters himself that he knows the nation just well enough to believe that, if the present work will be a successful one at all, it will be so mainly on account of the heterodox opinions given such emphasized prominence therein.

A matter that has given the author much greater concern than the possibility of his being legally prosecuted, is the dedication of the present volume, for he has been so tossed from pillar to post, affection being the pillar and discretion the post, that he came well nigh abandoning the solution of this knotty problem in despair. But at the suggestion of a kind critic, and upon mature consideration, he has concluded to dedicate the work to common sense, including humanity in general, since every living being is, indeed, individually interested in the question of the hereafter. He hopes that nobody will be disappointed, but there were too many personal claims to be considered, to arrive at any other conclusion. May each and all of the disappointed ones, if there are any, forgive the author, which they can do all the more easily, when they consider that the dedicatee of "The Infernal Comedy" would at best be enjoying a very doubtful honor.

The author has been careful to escape conventionalities in this preface, and will not now disfigure it with such, or burden it with further explanations and apologies; he therefore refers the reader, for further information, to "The Infernal Comedy" itself. He is not a little interested to know what the verdict will be, although he does not particularly care whether it will be favorable or not; to him, with regard to the present work, vituperation will be sweet flattery.

R. G

New York, October 1, 1880.

"Lasciate ogni speranza voi che entrate!"—DANTE.

THE INFERNAL COMEDY.

*"Mensch, verspötte nicht den Teufel!
Kurz ja ist die Lebensbahn;
Und die ewige Verdammnis
Ist kein blosser Pöbelwahn!"*

—HEINE.

GREETING:

I sing not for the world to like my song ;
To many ears, perchance, my strain is wrong :
I sing to please myself, and others, too,
Who'll change forthwith, to like my song, their view,
And form themselves to find a new ideal,
Quite other strains to hear, pulsations feel—
And if my song cannot command its world,
Then let it be into oblivion hurled !

BOOK I.

DARK DEATH.

CANTO I.

THE PAST.

“**A** LAS! I've led a wicked life,
A sinful, mad career;
A revelrous and reckless strife
It proved in all, I fear:

A life with folly in my heart,
With frolic in my brain;
So reckless did I play my part
That I was called insane.

In dark exploits, in shameful vice,
I threw my youth away,
And tired nature paid the price
Of manhood gone astray.

I knelt at idle pleasure's throne,
Enamored of her charm,
Where clouded skies were never known,
Nor sorrow nor alarm.

In principles, in sophistries
My fancy was indulged,
And fed with startling ministries
That cannot be divulged.

I knew no right, and knew no wrong;
I did what pleased me best;
I drank my wine, and sang my song
And minded no behest.

I loved my mistress: loved her well—
A wife? I had no wife.
You see, though I was so for hell,
For that I was not rife.

I kissed the girl, and fondled her,
And decked her out in gold:
So did I love and pet my cur—
As bought, so were they sold.

My days were spent in mad excess,
My morals were debased,
My sympathies ran to distress,
My honor stood defaced.

But we must live, and not like beasts;
Our life is short—too short!
So let us live at endless feasts,
And make the thing a sport.

What are the morals of a man?
What is his honor, pray?
The former wears he when he can,
When not, flings them away;

The latter is a tender flower:
Temptation chills its hue;
'Tis drenched in Mammon's golden shower
And nourished but by few.

I sold them all for love and wine,
And cried them down in song:
So was I free, and joy was mine:
So fine's the thing that's wrong.

A noble thought was not for me,
A sentiment I feared;
My heart was full of deviltry,
My soul with sin was bleared.

But then, what is a noble thought?
'Tis praised in poet's verse:
And poet's verses are but wrought
Some publisher to curse.

A sinful soul has no hard cares;
It lives at liberty
Or dull restraint and weary prayers,
And virtue's poverty.

I loved naught but the naked vice
That stared me in the face;
My intellect knew no device
That led not to disgrace:

But naked vice is better far
Than vice in virtue cloaked;
Disgrace can nothing touch nor mar;
Its bearer is not yoked.—

I liked the Bacchanalian songs,
I courted drunken joy,
And joined the most abandoned throngs
While I was still a boy.

And I did well! I owed no man
A duty; I was free;
My credit to destruction ran:
But credit is a flea

That bites and bothers all the time,
And gives no moment's peace,

That will not with diversion chime,
And wants too long a lease.

My ruin proved the spotted card,
My sorrow proved the die;
With woman I my manhood marred,
My virtue to defy.

But ruin means dependence ne'er,
And sorrow oft is sweet;
And woman is so fine, so fair;
And vice is such a treat!

My virtue? Ha, I knew it not,
And do not know it now;
I drowned it in the awful blot
Of sin, in many a row:

A blot, aye, blot on worldly woe,
A blot on worldly strife;
Without it would I pine; not know
This miserable life.

My fame was born in golden wine,
In which I laved my all;
I would not, at the dearest shrine,
Acknowledge reason's thrall.

I had no other shrine but self,
No other link that bound
Me to the world, and all the pelf
That in it may be found.—

My faith in God? I owned no creed;
My life was too profane;
Profane, but pleasant. Say, what need
Had I to heaven attain?

What would you have? A man must live,
And living, must enjoy—
How easy 'tis one's soul to give
To Satan for a toy:

He plays it well, so well I would
Know of no future bliss,
No other world, no happier mood
Than I have found in this.

I never made a good resolve,
I knew the thing would break;
No prayer can now my soul absolve;
I am a sorry rake!

Ha, ha! But future rakes will sing
Of me, the king of rakes:
No better tribute could they bring;
How happy me it makes!

What need to pray? I would not pray;
E'en heaven high would prove dull;
Besides, what can I do or say
My record to annul?

Away with penitence, with prayer;
The coward only prays,
When death into his face doth stare,
And it no more delays.—

From tears I wrung the golden prize,
From wrecks I gleaned my gain:
I turned from pleading words and eyes;
They wept and bleared in vain.

If men instead of men will be
Rank fools, is it my fault?
They might have had the best of me,
And cried my victory halt.

I won the race, and stand defamed—
Confound all earthly fame!—
I am the victor, nor ashamed
Despoiled to leave my name.—

A woman proved no sacred thing
In my depraved esteem,
And chastity could never bring
A blush my cheek to teem.

But la! I had a merry time;
How gaily went the hours!
What if they drew through filth and slime
Me on to sin's dark bowers?

Dark, did I say? Nay, light as day,
Effulgent with delight,
Illuminated with display,
Where'er I turned my sight.

I never knew a single care,
And ne'er knew struggle's woe;
The choicest pleasures were my fare;
I won at every throw!

I lived! So live and follow me,
And honor me my life,
And carve my name on every tree
A hero in the strife.

I take a pleasure in the fame
Of fellow such as I;
My life was never dull nor tame:
To prove it, needs but try.

The gates of hell are gates of glee,
And hell itself a fair
Of rare delight and revelry
And sport without compare.—

How bright is death when life was dark,
How dark, when life was bright;
And sin when stripped, how dread, how stark;
How black the on-come night!

The contest bids me nigh despair;
I should abandon hope;
But with most unaffrighted air
Will I into death grope.

What can I fear? I've still the wits
That built up my career:
The shadow of destruction flits
About me, while I cheer.

Come on, grim Death. I fear thee not:
Haste hither, haste, hot hell;

And while I lie in damp and rot,
My soul, still staunch, shall swell,

Its fiery legions to defy.
As dares the hero death,
When tattooed demons taunt and try,
Amidst the flames' fell breath.

So will I stand before the throne
Of Satan in his realm,
And stand beside the blister-blown
Defiance's stern helm.

Advance with torture, gloom and night,
Commence the frightful scene ;
Charge on with overpowering might,
Display the red and green :

'Tis virtue but that fears the test
Of judgment at the last,
And trembles at divine behest.
To stand within the blast.—

A drama this career 'll not end ;
The curtain ne'er shall fall
On rapture, and the villain tend
To drown and die in gall.

The painted stage is but a lie ;
In life, the play ends weak,
And in it wretches do not die,
And gallant heroes wreak

On villains punishment, affright,
On couples love and bliss,
On schemers ignominy, flight,
Amidst the gallery's hiss.

Quite otherwise the grand finale
Of this, my play, shall be ;
Quite different shall the last signal
Here sound and swell, trust me.—

So am I safe ; I will yet win
Wherever I may go ;
The oats shall yet bring blush on sin
That I have yet to sow !

Life's dream is o'er ; I loved it well ;
But I shall love death too,
When I shall revel down in hell,
Fledged in with pursuits new?"

—:0:—

CANTO II.

THE DYING DUELLIST.

SO speaking, lay upon the grass,
Beneath a starlit sky,
Alone, in a sequestered pass,
A manly form to die.

The moon-rays cast a fitful gleam
Upon th' upturned pale face,
A face that seemed as though a dream
Held it in its embrace.

The eye stared into unseen, far
Expanses, visionful,
And shone as yonder twinkling star
So bright' derisionful :

It was the dying effort made
To utilize its sight,
And so it pierced, in its decade,
The wild and gloomy night,

A flash with calm, assertive power,
As to defy the world ;
The shameful past to overpower
E'er 'twas to ruin hurled.

It was a face without reproach,
A face that breathed soul,
That knew no fear at the approach
Of such a living's goal.

The energy, the swarthy hue,
The massive brow's anneal,
Where stood no death-nigh, clammy dew,
Bespoke the man of steel.

Each feature was a faultless curve,
Full symmetry and grace,
Each bore the signs of classic nerve :
It was a handsome face.

The Grecian nose, the dark, deep eye,
The firm, compressed, full lips,
His origin did not belie ;
Patrician toe to tip !

The firm-set chin, the raven hair
That curled about the head,
The rounded cheek, the dauntless air :
The nobleman portrayed.

The black moustache, so careful' waxed,
With chin and cheek else smooth,
No tithe his handsomeness relaxed,
An outraged muse to soothe,

His looks and features to conform
With those black traits within,
The traits that held the heart, yet warm,
In their embrace of sin.—

His costume was a fitting one
For such a man at death,
Whose clay was to behold the sun
At morn, bereft of breath :

The neck was bare, as was an arm,
To elbow stripped of sleeve—
You will have guessed that some dread harm
Left him but slight reprieve.—

The form was clad in snow-white shirt
And well cut pantaloons ;

Some spots betrayed the shocking hurt
That brought the end so soon.

The spots were blood, and clotted gore.
That flowed the breast adown
Shot through beside the bosom's core;
A wound of much renown,

That proved the death of many knights
And many warriors bold,
Sustained in many bloody fights,
And laid them out so cold.

The hand, yet nervous, grimly clutched
A pistol, whence the ball
Was gone, but had no victim touched,
Nor told of mortal fall;

For this was not a scene of crime,
Of shameful suicide
Another ball had fixed the time,
And stayed the sinful tide

That marked this person's horrid life:
A duel had been fought,
And Nemesis the vengeance-rife
Carouser's end had sought.

Near by lay coat and hat and cloak
Left there to lie unclaimed,
That ne'er again would bear the yoke
Of ownership defamed.

He that had fired the fatal shot,
Was now far, far away;
The scene of fight had been the spot
Before the close of day;

The victim had been left for dead,
No seconds had been used;
The other duellist had fled
And would not be accused.

He'd been a brother, now was not;
A sister once he'd had;
But misplaced love had been her lot;
Her ending had been sad;

And he who was to blame for this,
Lay weltering in his blood;
And now, for the betrayer's kiss,
He chewed death's bitter end.

And yet he'd not the lesson learned
This issue should have taught;
Away from him repentance turned
And him damnation wrought.

So heart and soul and intellect
May hopelessly debase,
So may on shame and sin be wrecked,
And sink into disgrace,

As may the finest pearl be lost
In refuse and in dust—
Ah, who can count the fearful cost
Of o'erindulged-in lust?

Thus will in endless strain reflect
The moralist, and wail;
Still he, shot through, so weak, bare-necked,
At him would laugh and rail:

Perhaps with right, for happy 'd been
The life he chose to lead;
It had been bright what he had seen,
Before he had to bleed.

The aches and ills that come along
With revelry and glee,
Are borne as necessary wrong,
And suffered cheerfully.

He had had sense, and made his choice,
As he was free to tell:
Was he not now to pay the price
Of it, perhaps with hell?

He set his teeth; but he, as said,
Was ready, and would pay:
E'en if it to perdition led,
He had not flown away.

Would you rebuke him for his choice,
And rate the man a fool?
Raise protest in stentorian voice,
And chide me for my school?

Remember we're all more or less
Sad fools, as oft we tend,
So do not lay too great a stress
On folly as here penned,

As rampant in a fellow fool
Who threw his life away,
And disobeyed each golden rule
That should have been his stay;

Who clouded mind and heart and soul
With fallacy and wrong:
Pursue him onward in his role,
And profit by my song.

—:O:—

CANTO III.

—
FAITH.
—

AND as he lay, and groaned in pain,
And hell and heaven cursed,
His wound afire, full hope for rain,
To cool his burning thirst,

There stole a sheen of gentle light
Adown the raven sky,
Athrough the chill and ink night,
Amidst the night-wind's sigh;

And into vision broke a form
 So fair and fancy free,
 As hulls amid the howling storm
 Are welcomed on the sea.

Its brow was like the summer sun
 So brilliant and so bright,
 That hearts of stone were turned and won,
 Enamored of the sight;

Its eye was like the full-moon's beam
 So gentle and so pure;
 With softness did its glances teem,
 All nature to allure.

It stepped unto the wounded man
 With lightest tread and saith,
 Into his ear these words it ran:
 "Hark thee, my name is Faith.

Would I were thine to learn and love,
 To read the golden joy
 That waits thy spirit there above,
 Eternal, sans alloy,

As it was written on my soul
 When given birth and life—
 Say, ere thy knell of doom shall toll,
 Wilt have me for thy wife?

I'll love thee well, so very well
 That in this brief delay
 From life to death, to heaven or hell,
 I'll pave thee yet the way

That leads to those enchanted realms
 Of everlasting love:
 A love that lives, and overwhelms
 Far others than the dove.—

Am I not beautiful and fair?
 Can I thee not inspire?
 Wilt not with me those blessings share
 I bid thee now admire?

Oh come, be mine, as I'll be thine;
 In vain be it not saith—
 Wilt thou my image not enshrine?
 Oh, wilt thou not *have Faith*?

I'll still the blood that runs adown
 Thy bosom on its way;
 I'll steal thy brow that hateful frown,
 And make thee once more gay;

I'll prove thee true forever more—
 Oh, harken to my word:
 In hell below its echoes roar;
 In heaven, too, it was heard;

And demons' hate and angels' love
 Await thy nay or aye;
 In vale below, in air above
 Impatient 'round they lie:

Then speak: it is for times to come
 That human mind would fail

In ages, less in years, to sum,
 So boundless is their tale.—

See, I have lips that kiss as sweet
 As Sin's, and eyes that flash,
 And arms to wind, and pretty feet:
 Then be not thou too rash.

Have Faith! She'll serve thee ever well,
 And grant eternal bliss;
 In hell, fell horrors do but swell
 And glaring monsters hiss

At thee, and raging fires abound
 To torture thee fore'er,
 For dreadful fright and stunning sound
 But fill th' infernal lair."

The duellist his vision turned
 Upon the lovely maid;
 Her with his look he withering spurned,
 And this is what he said:

"Thou pleadest well: so well that I,
 Were I a common knave,
 Would gladly lay me down to die,
 And follow thee, thy slave.

But I, though I have lived in sin,
 Have lived not all in vain,
 And though I've wild and reckless been,
 Have reaped no little gain:

The gain of intellect, I mean,
 That knows to sever dross
 From value: that perception keen
 That never is at loss

To tell from seeming right the true,
 From glittering dross the gold;
 That gift possess so very few,
 They can be easily told.—

Thy speech is bright, but idle glare:
 The masses 'neath it bask;
 With open-mouthed wonder stare
 And never stop to ask.

Thou art an immaterial ray
 That wakes the sense of sight;
 At touch, thou fleest far away
 In sorrowful affright.

Faith? Empty name! On earth they smile
 At mention of a trust;
 Though thou shouldst starve and rot therewith
 They lend but when they must.

To knowing minds thou art a belle
 That will not flirt, but blush
 When ogled by some handsome swell,
 But art not worth a rush;

Thou art a pretty butterfly
 When taken in thyself,
 A creature for the dreamy eye,
 A dazzling, flitting elf:

But thou hast relatives I hate,
Whom I must wed along—
No, no, sweet child, I like thy prate,
But will not go me wrong.

There's sister Prayer : confound the air
Of saintliness she wears ;
I'd rather meet the wanton stare
Of her that shocking swears.

It soothes my heart, my wicked heart,
But heart that loves the right—
Thou seem'st incredulous ; there dart
Black looks from out thy sight.

Thou canst not understand that when
Morality is linked
With wrong by theologic ken,
My sympathies are kinked ;

That when are blotted right and wrong
Into one hideous mass,
Then must the burden of my song
Thy relatives by pass.

I will not hurt the tender shoots
Of love that 'round thee cling,
Nor sour thee, child, with worldly hoots,
Thy frail delight to wring.

I cannot make me understand—
I darken as I think.
Thou art a thoughtless child, and good ;
Our natures cannot link.

Good-night to thee, a long good-night !
Good-night, perhaps, fore'er,
Go, take in peace from hence thy flight,
And leave me to my care."

He smiled, and closed his fullsome eyes,
And left the region stark,
While Faith ascended to the skies
Above from out the dark.

—:0:—

CANTO IV.

THE FEAR OF DEATH.

HOW burned the gaping bullet wound,
How parched became the tongue ;
How throbbled his brow till nigh he swooned,
How was that bosom wrung :

" Oh hasten, Death, to my relief !
This torment is too great.
It drives me mad ! Oh, make it brief ;
Why linger, oh, why wait ?

No longer linger, longer wait ?
Ha ! what was that I said ?

What did I, with my idle prate,
Devolve upon my head ?

My end ? My end from present life,
From being ? By my soul,
The thought is like a keen-edged knife,
Is like a livid coal ;

It cuts, it burns my intellect—
O God, it drives me mad !
Oh, had I not my virtue wrecked,
And hastened to the bad—

What say I ? Do I call on God ?
Haha ! I am insane ;
My wound that opens o'er the sod
My blood, 's gone to my brain !

'Sdeath, how I shake ! Away, thou fiend
Of blackness, of despair !
Wherefrom's this sudden horror gleaned ?
How every sense doth flare !

I dying ? Dying ! what is death ?
The future of 'to be' ;
The close of life, the last of breath,
The dread eternity !

My palms ooze out their clammy fear,
My brow stands full of drops
That run adown it, and besmear
It with renewed out-crops."

He starts, he grasps his streaming hair,
He gives a hideous yell ;
He tears his bloody bosom bare :
" Help, heaven ! Oh help, hell !

I will not die ! I want to live ;
I am yet young, yet strong ;
The proper remedies will give
Me yet existence long.

O God ! O angels fair and pure !
O Satan ! Demons foul !
O, hear me now ye all assure
Repentance !!—Round be prow!

Unfancied terrors, unseen sprites
That glow with racking fire,
Prodigious beasts and monstrous frights
That me with hell inspire ;

They groan and hiss, they howl and shriek,
They flash, and flap, and flare ;
They crawl and creep, with horror reek—
'Tis more than I can bear !

Avaunt, grim Death ! I am not thine ;
I am not born to die
So soon, so far from aid divine ;
In all I've said, I lie !

Away ! Oh, help ! Away ! Away !
Off ! Touch me not ! Oh, fly !
Sh ! No, not death ! Cursed be the day
I met the girl that I

Have suffered for this fatal night
 With—no, not so, with death :
 The rising sun's effulgent light
 Will find me yet in breath.

I will not die ! You hear, not die !
 I will—I *must*—SHALL live !
 Live ! Fearful Death, thou shalt not try
 The last grains now to sieve

In with the rest that tell the tale
 Of hours long in the past.
 And now with horror me regale—
 Hold on, they go too fast !

Hold on, I say ! I will not die !
 Hold ! Hast thou me not heard ?
 O Death !"—A shriek. 'Thou night-winds sigh ;
 They had not heard a word.

The foam stands out upon his mouth.
 The eyes far out protrude ;
 The cross stands out upon the south
 With pointedness imbued.

He sees it not ; his mind is blank ;
 The terror was too much ;
 Deep into every fibre sank
 Of icy death the touch.

But yet it throbbed, that worried heart,
 Though throbbed now wild, now low ;
 It had received fore'er its dart ;
 Soon would it cease to go.—

A nameless thing of hideous mien
 Now hovered o'er the man ;
 A shudder seized him, and a keen,
 Quick tremor through him ran.

It settled on the quiet form,
 It grasped it by the throat ;
 It reveled in the blood still warm,
 And o'er it seemed to gloat.

Then swelled the sleeper's sunken face,
 Then stole the glassy eyes
 From out their sockets, and apace
 The horror seemed to rise.

Like whip-cords stood his veins then out,
 The smothered bosom rose ;
 The anguished lips repressed a shout,
 And higher grew his woes.

The mind appeared to lose its hold
 On reason, and to swell
 With fear and frightful awe untold,
 Wrapped in some horrid spell ;

The perspiration stood like dew
 Upon the clammy brow,
 And every fibre throbbed anew
 Its terror to avow ;

The working lips twitched nervously,
 Distorted grew his face ;

He rolled in shocking agony
 That over him did chase.

He started up, he oped his eyes,
 He saw the nameless Thing ;
 Upon his feet he tried to rise,
 And from him far it fling.

Then broke from out his livid lips
 A yell so fierce, so loud ;
 But tighter him the object grips,
 Abjectly down he cowed,

Half strangled, nearly dead with fright,
 Ashake in every limb,
 Full loathing at the fearful sight
 Before him there so grim :

His hair stands on its startled ends.
 His countenance now pales,
 Each feature with despair distends
 And 'fore its torment quails.

Such high-strung and atrocious pain
 As through this man did swell,
 Was never elsewhere known again,
 Not e'en in Dante's hell :

He shrieked, he foamed, he tore his hair,
 He beat his wounded breast,
 He shivered at the nameless glare
 Of those eyes' foudlsome zest.

And then he sank exhausted back,
 Devoid of every breath,
 There floated through the dismal black :
 "I am the Fear of Death !"

The Thing was gone, the struggle o'er ;
 The sufferer grew more calm ;
 A brighter look the features wore,
 As if a soothing balm

Were poured upon the troubled soul
 And on the beating heart ;
 The agony had reached its goal,
 The fright had done its part.

To such fell horror was the prey
 The man who on the sod
 Here at the door of death now lay
 Unmindful of his God.

So dies the man whose total life
 Was one profane, foul breath ;
 So ends the wicked, sinful strife
 In shocking fear of death !

CANTO V.

REMORSE.

AND as this man was lying there,
 A prey to torture fell,

A peal of thunder through the air
Resounded like a knell

That calls a guilty soul away
To expiate in woe
Eternally the yesterday,—
As which the past we know,—

And followed by a lightning flash
That dazzled sense and eye—
The distant waters roaring splash,
The tempest rumbles by :

A thousand terrors seem afloat
To goad the crazing brain,
And rampant horrors seem to gloat,
And taunt the suffering swain.

The terrors grow, the horrors rise,
The pandemonium swells,
The air is filled with shocking cries,
The heart with burning hells.

Athrough the forest bursts a form,
Half borne upon the wind,
Outriding thunder, flash and storm,
And by the night bedlinded.

It starts at sight of blood and man,
Stops short, and seems to quail ;
With anxious eyes begins to scan
The features stark and pale.

It hears the labored breaths and groans,
It feels the throbbing pulse ;
It sees the quiver-covered bones
In agony convulse :

It throws itself upon his breast
In wild, disordered state,
It cries in tones of anguished zest :
“ O God, is it too late ? ”

It was a supple female form,
It was a woman fair
That cried the words above the storm,
That cried them out in air.

As livid as the storm she looked,
As black her flowing hair
As was, in howling passes nooked,
The night-enceinte, cold air.

The breast, so snowy white, was bare,
Aside the thin shroud blown,
But wanton eyes not lingered there
Where bloody spots were shown :

It seemed as though, in fits of rage,
She had abraised the skin,
And deeply led her nails to wage
Into the flesh within :

That tortured, bleeding breast arose
And fell, as void of breath,
And filled instead with bitter throes
That spoke of nighing death.

She panted as she bent o'er him,
The slowly dying swain,
And hit her lip in effort grim
From sobbing to abstain.

And yet her eyes were streaming wet,
Suffused with tear on tear ;
On features wan these, mingling met,
A livid face to bear

The noble brow was cracked with woe,
The lips convulsed with pain,
The chin atremble, cheeks aglow ;
She mastered them in vain.

She wrapped her arms about the youth,
She kissed his pallid lip
As if to drink a soothing truth
Where sin was wont to dip.

She said in accents quivering, low,
They rang so piteously :
“ Thou hast permitted Faith to go ;
Wilt love her mother—me ? ”

I watched o'er thee when thou wert born,
And followed thee through life,
With tenderest affection torn,
And wished to be thy wife.

But thou neglectedst my attempt
To win the merest glance ;
Well wast thou e'er from me exempt ;
I failed, thee to entrance.

Thou fledst my long and vain pursuit
To touch thy stony heart,
And every step didst thou dispute
I took to act my art.

I had a rival everywhere
That every month was new ;
Thou laidst beside the world's most fair
On roses in the dew ;

And hadst no word, no eyes for me
Who followed day by day,
Essaying, yet to wrest from thee
Thy smile, thy love for aye.

I knew that still the time would come
When I could claim the man
For whom, through all his living's hum,
So steadfastly I ran.

That time has come, that time is here ;
Oh say now, am I thine ?
I see thy mind to core so clear
As if it were the mine.

The last love thou hast had on earth
Thou bleed'st now to atone,
And ne'er again will mortal mirth
Thy pain and woe dethrone.

Then say thou'lt wed me on the spot,
That thou return'st my love ;

Believe, it will erase the blot
Against thy name, above."

She spoke to him, she clung to him,
She grasped the clammy hand,
And listened, as were wrung from him
These words, to understand:

"'Tis true, I fled from thee where'er
In life we chanced to meet;
Why should I've clogged with tearful care
My pleasure-feathered feet?

I liked no eyes that were inflamed,
Nor ravished, bloody breasts,
Nor hair disheveled, features maimed
With woe and long unrests.

If I did not admire the child,
I like the mother less;
By Faith I might have been beguiled:
Thy presence is distress!"

He struggled hard to shake her off,
And stretched each wincing wound;
She choked adown his withering scoff
And clasped him till he swooned.

She grasped from out of air a sword,
And screamed till she was hoarse:
"Of all thy mistresses adored,
The last one is Remorse!"

He 'woke, and stared her in the face
Like one who is at bay
At end of some prolonged, hot chase:
He cried aloud: "Away!"

But she, in bloody contact, pressed,
Aglow with ardent heat,
Herself upon his heaving chest
And plamed the latent beat.

She held him as if thence fore'er
Her victim to restrain,
As if his soul's remotest lair
To enter and to gain;

She held him till for breath he gasped,
Until he was undone;
She held him till the rattle rasped
His throat, and he was won

Beyond defiance and defence,
And ne'er to be reclaimed;
Now would the dreadful scene begin
For which Remorse was famed.

He was her own, to be beset
By terrors that she willed;
And so, each eye a flaming threat,
His blood with pain she stilled.

She tortured him she had adored,
She struck him brutal blows,
His wounds with fiendish fingers gored;
And yet the horror 'rose:

She caught him by the swelling throat
Ane dashed him on the ground,
His head with knotted cudgel smote
That dull she heard resound:

She tore his skin in dripping strips
From off the quivering flesh,
She beat him raw with willow whips
And oped each wound afresh;

She pierced him with her reeking blade,
And ripped him out his eyes;
She dragged him through the rocky glade
With mad, exultant cries;

She trod him under wanten feet,
And cursed him to the soul;
She trampled, thrust, and dragged and beat
E'en to the bitter goal;

She burned him with a flaming torch
Which sudden she produced,
That every fibre felt the scorch
The greedy fire adduced;

She tore the hair in handfuls out,
And left him not a shred
Of vestment, skin not put to rout;
She left him there for dead!—

And he? He could not even swoon,
The pain was so intense;
How death then would have been a boon,
The torture so immense.

He tried to scream, but had no tongue
Wherewith to aid the voice;
The fury had it quivering wrung
From him, and left no choice.

Defence impossible, so weak,
So tortured and so worn;
And nothing but a smothered shriek
From bleeding throat was torn.

She grasped him by the swollen arm
And dragged him to the brink
Of an abyss in dire alarm,
Into its depths to sink,

Through clouds and shrubs and raven mist,
Her victim, and to end
The shocking scene with ruthless fist,
And death and night to blend.

The duellist an effort made
The fury to resist,
But in that frame no power was laid
That he could now enlist.

She pushed him to the very verge
With mien and gesture rough,
And—in the bush there was a surge;
A voice cried out: "Enough!"

And into murky vision stepped
A bright, angelic form;

Remorse fell back ; away she swept
On pinions of the storm.

—:0:—

CANTO VI.

—
AZRAEL.
—

THE vision hovered o'er the swain,
And healed him of his ills ;
Bent o'er, and cured him of his pain ;
Removed his anguish'd chills.

A thunderclap convulsed the air,
And every echo woke ;
And by the fitful lightnings' glare,
The angel to him spoke :

" If thou hast nothing else deserved,
I know a maiden fair
Who never from thy love has swerved,
And holds thee in her care.

The maid is Pity, pure and sweet ;
She loves thee to the end ;
The feelings that from her thee greet,
No passion can transcend.

Thou hast rejected purity ;
Thine was a life of sin ;
The soothing balm of honesty
Thou ne'er hast felt within ;

Thou wast not shone on by the sun :
Those hours thou slept'st away ;
With eve thy day was but begun,
And that was spent in play

With wanton women, song and wine,
With recklessness and vice ;
And therefore must thou now repine,
And pay the final price.

'Tis but with those like thee Remorse
Enacts the frightful scene
Thou hast outlived this night, perforce,
In yonder murky green.

'Tis but with those like thee that frights,
Like awful Fear of Death,
Are acted on these dismal sites
Of horror and choked breath.

Ah mortal, many are the souls
I meet upon my path,
I lead to their respective goals,
And save from furies' wrath.

For know that I am Azrael,
The angel of the Lord,

And stationed in this fatal dell
With keen and ready sword

To sever flesh from mortal breath,
And body from the soul,
To give o'er life to silent death,
And each de cease to toll.

Von rocky path leads heavenward,
To the eternal life,
Where naught but joys the steps retard
And ends the mortal strife.

But downward there leads on the way
E'en to the very gates
Of realms beneath the fearful sway
Of Satan ; and the Fates

Cannot recall the wanderer when
That path has once been trod ;
Beyond the reach of earthly ken
The wretched slave must prod.

I meet with all who come this way
To pay their final due,
Release them from their flesh, and say
What pathway to pursue.

Von river, coursing through the meads
By blooming flower beds,
Past softly rustling, swaying reeds,
Its sparkling water sheds

Through miles of borderland of earth
And tracts of blissful realms,
Dividing from thy sod of birth
The shore that overwhelms

The weary traveler with delight,
The tired feet with rest,
The dimming eyes with angel-sight,
And bids the soul be blessed.

It is the Jordan flowing on,
Dividing life from death ;
Here shattered forms and faces wan
Revive beneath its breath.

And yonder sluggish stream below
That glides so dark and fast,
With treacherous whirl and undertow
The rocky banks apart—

Thou knowest as the fatal Styx,
Placed there with rigid lines,
The realms infernal e'er to fix
Within their dark confines.

That river, mortal, is for thee
To cross upon this night ;
Below, thou canst old Charon see
To bear thee from my sight.

If thou hast aught, before my sword
Shall sever thee from life,
To say, then speak at once the word,
For now the time is rife."

The angel paused. The youth replied :
 " Naught but to say good-bye."
 Then Azrael raised his sword, and sighed :
 " Prepare thee, then, to die !"

The youth staid firm, the sword flashed through
 His frame, but made no wound ;
 The face relaxed its life-like hue
 As though he had but swooned.

The soul, released, sped to the stream
 Below, and Charon bore

Within his craft the doomed, in dream,
 Unto the other shore.

And Azrael gazed with sorrow'd eye
 As he was row'd from sight,
 Then once more heaved a heavy sigh
 And vanished in the night.

The morrow's sun shone on a form
 Devoid of life and breath,
 Deceased in horror, night and storm,
 Forever hush'd in death.

THE END OF DARK DEATH.



BOOK II.

THE INFERNAL REALMS.

CANTO I.

THE DREAM OF HELL.

ONWARD into gloom unuttered
Sped a shadowy, daring soul
Toward the fearful, night-enfluttered
Human folly's ultimate goal,—

Far behind him Charon sadly
Paddling to the mundane shore
Through the torrents seething madly
'Neath the pressure of the oar,—

Sped, with every fibre throbbing,
Sped, with every sense awake,
Through the wind and weather sobbing
On the wildland, in the brake;

Bursting with a new existence,
With a bulging heart and soul;
Giving o'er without resistance
To the fever of the whole.

Sense and reason seemed expanded,
Every doubtful issue clear,
Ignorance and error stranded;
Not a faculty was blur.

Not a vestige of the image
He had born as mortal man
Had been altered in the scrimmage
With his death while 'neath its ban.

But an undefined, grand feeling
Held possession of his mind,
Pictures unto him revealing
Which in viewing struck him blind

With their lustrous, weird proportion,
Pompous and appalling sense,
Not a feature an abortion,
Not a mien a vain pretense.

Then and there he paused to ponder
On the paltry earthly state;
Idle, futile all was yonder;
Here so wondrously elate.

There a fleeting pleasure thrilled him,
Seemed the compass of his life;
Here a mammoth grandeur filled him
Which bore no compare to strife

As experienced 'in the portals
E'en of most abandoned glee
There among his fellow mortals
In their daily vanity.

Here his bosom 'rose, and stumbled
'Neath the weight of its design,
And his dreams defiant crumbled
Into passiveness condign.

Here stood naked human folly
'Reft of all its spurious glare,
And an earnest melancholy
Laid its leprous bosom bare.

Onward sped he, nor knew whither,
Yet the soul desired no rest;
On the winds he winged on thither
To the gates of woe, to test,

In the combat with all evil,
Who would in the arts excel,
Who would prove the greater devil
Who would reign down there in hell.

All this darkness had no terrors
For this staunch and dogged heart,
This acumen saw no errors
In the reckoning of his part;

Here he felt domesticated,
In these grim and dear abodes,
Here his fancy was elated,
In these hellish antipodes;

Here his sympathies were soothed
With the dawn that was at hand,
Here his fiercest passions smoothed
Into contemplations bland:

Every syllable he'd boasted
He would here substantiate,
Every hellish thought he'd toasted
He would here with glee narrate.

In the night-winds he heard flutter
Winged shapes that fanned his brow;
Strange dictations heard them mutter,
Their allegiance to avow:

"Though the prophecy should kill us,
Thou art he whom we await;
Hail, all hail too thee, Armillus!
We will share thy glorious fate!"

And he sped on, most astounded
At that strange and foreign name :
How his heart with grandeur bounded
As he read in it his fame.

He Armillus? God in heaven!
Was that his immortal state?
In his wildest fancies even,
He had never felt so great.

Did he hear aught the mention?
Was 't not uttered to delude?
Was it history's intention
That he should be thus imbued?

Still they whispered: "Thou shalt fill us
With the glories of the past;
Hail, all hail to thee, Armillus!
Thy design is nearing fast.

Proudest natures wilt thou humble,
Greatest powers wilt thou fell,
Empires 'neath thy sword will crumble;
Hail thee, thou hast chosen well."

"Oh," he cried, with rapture boiling,
"How I thank ye, shades of night;
I have not in vain been toiling,
I have set my plans aright.

Though my life did seem all madness,
Though I ended terribly,
I awaken now to gladness
On the brink of victory.

Though the roadway led through passions,
Led through vice and sin and shame,
Led through most adulterous fashions,
Led through many a desperate game,

Still the moral did not falter
Through the wrecks of seeming wrong;
Now, appearances will alter;
All will not seem error long.

Through mad mazes of delusion
Have I waded night and day,
Through thick webs of wild confusion
Have I cut my restless way

Into these infernal regions,
To be hailed supremest king
By Mephisto's clouded legions
Fluttering 'round on unseen wing.

Even now methinks I issue
Into the infernal scene;
Lighter grows the murky tissue;
Brighter visions come between."

Here he faltered, and descended
To the ground, and sank adown;
Here the strain prophetic ended;
Misty was the outlook grown.

Into slumber's sweet dominion
Sank the high' exalted soul;

On a dream's light, airy pinion
Floated he unto the goal,

Reached he the terrific regions
Which precede the gates of hell,
Where dark powers' hideous legions
Burst into one fearful yell

As he crossed the bridge connecting
Shore with shore o'er the abyss
Of foul terrors, soul affecting
With the horror of their hiss,

Till he reached the gates, where frightful
Visions of unwombing sin
Made the shocking view unsightful.
And a sense-confounding din

'Woke the echoes of the mountains
Bounding the abode of fire
With its flames and scorching fountains
Seething high and ever higher.

At the gates infernal, etching
Deep into the granite crown
O'er it, stood a figure sketching
Out a maxim of renown:

"*Lasciate ogni speranza,*
Voi che entrate" slow;
And the dreamy soul the Stanza
Incomplete, repeated low.

"What a sentiment for ante-
Chamber decoration," he
Said reflectively, "gave us Dante
For this fiendish privacy.

Now that I look on the features
Of this cruelly sentenced man,
From the earth's impotent creatures
I this face remember can.

No, I cannot be mistaken;
This is not a hellish elf;
'Tis the exiled and forsaken
Poet Dante, aye, himself!

What a wretched occupation
For the grim eternity;
How unique an illustration
Of the doom of poesy!"

Then with true Miltonic thunder
Crashed th' infernal gates ajar,
And disclosed the hellish wonder,
What the fiery regions are.

O'er the threshold stepped our hero
Into the Satanic realm
Where the Evil One, a Nero,
Sat in state, to overwhelm

Comers with his fearful splendor
There amidst the frightful gloom,
For their sins account to render,
And to listen to their doom.

Shieking on their hinge, behind him
 Closed the portals ponderously ;
 Helpless and alone we find him
 With the hideous majesty.

For a moment but he trembled ;
 Then he nerved himself to see,
 His misgivings well dissembled
 In a grave placidity.

Satan smiled a welcome to him
 Which revulsed him to the core
 And served well nigh to unto him
 But he held himself and bore

Without flinching what portended
 Lay in that sinister glance ;
 With his courage it was blended,
 As design is mixed with chance.

All his expectations golden
 Were at sight at once dispelled ;
 Ne'er had he before beholden
 Such grim fact from fancy shelled :

Where he'd thought a crimson curtain,
 Was a rugged, frowning rock ;
 Where of art he'd been so certain,
 He beheld a naked block ;

Where a splendid hall he'd looked for,
 He but saw a gloomy cave ;
 And where life he here had booked for,
 Lit he on a silent grave ;

Where he'd dreant of royal riches,
 Gazed he in the face of want ;
 And the figure-studded niches
 Each became a gloomy haunt ;

Where he had seen but high revel,
 Lamentation gtruck his ear ;
 And where he'd ne'er angured evil,
 Saw he shrinking, ghastly fear.

Roasting souls, in livid ember,
 Shrieked aloud in awful pain ;
 Wretches viewed he here dismember
 Till the sight drove him insane.

Here and there were dread abysses
 Where no bottom he could see,
 Whence there issued groans and hisses,
 Cries of woe and misery.

Fitful gleamed the flames uprising
 From each ever burning pyre,
 On the walls strange shades devising ;
 All was torture, lurid fire.

Imps and demons noiseless flittered
 Through the terrible domain ;
 Horribly their glances glittered :
 Everywhere the same weird strain.

In the distances were flaming
 Lakes of restless' tossing flare,

On them hideous beasts exclaiming
 In the midst of all the glare.

Presently the sovereign beckoned
 To Armillus to approach,
 And the new arrival reckoned
 On his end, but no reproach

Issued from the lips infernal
 Of the fallen Lucifer ;
 Rather was his look paternal.
 And his smiles less dreadful were.

" Welcome, stranger," he then uttered,
 " In our stark and drear abode."
 And our hero's heart him fluttered
 As he slowly thither strode.

" We can but receive in sadness,
 For our smiles can cause but tears,
 And our home's the haunt of madness,
 Endless drudgery and fears.

We would fain receive thee, sinner,
 As a brother here below,
 And proclaim thee as a winner
 In the strife. Alas, we show

Thee a different' hued reception,
 Manifest in gloom and fire :
 Stranger, thou hast lived deception,
 Thee awaits eternal ire.

I am weary of the terror
 I must cause to such as thee,
 And too late I see my error ;
 Once I lived in sanctity,

But I now endure repentance
 Such as mortal never knew,
 And I here eke out my sentence,
 I, and all my hellish crew.

I can never hope for mercy ;
 Hope not thou, for 'tis in vain ;
 He who comes here must our curse he
 Suffer in a like sad strain.

Hope stops short at Satan's portals ;
 We have left it at all behind ;
 So will ye, unhappy mortals,
 Here it ever banished find.

Sought ye pleasure in dominions
 Consecrated but to woe ?
 Then have I on your opinions
 Disappointment to bestow.

Here prepare to writhe and tremble,
 Curse the hour that gave ye birth,
 And to wish ye could assemble
 Once more on your mother earth

To live o'er again existence
 As ye would when then ye die,
 And had struggled with persistence
 'Gainst all sin and vice and lie.

Here in these abodes of penance,
With their horror, with their gloom,
Are fore'er ye bound as tenants;
Realize what is your doom.

Thou art damned! Dost know the meaning
Of that most portentous word?
Find it in those victims screaming,
Find it from their woes inferred.

Tremble, mortal! It approaches
Now, the hour of racking pain;
Heep thyself with the reproches
Thou wouldst cry in ceaseless strain

Out of me, for here the harvest
Wilt thou reap of self-sown sin;
Here for sympathy thou starvest,
Maledictions drowned in din.

Seize him, demons! Let his sentence
Be upon his luckless head!
He has spurned away repentance;
Let him now with hell be wed!"

And a thousand hands outstretched
To obey their king's command,
And their latest victim wretched
With his frightful doom to brand.

They already had him lifted
Through the nearest scorching flame,
And the depths of pain he sifted
As the sheets enwrapped his frame.

Higher waxed the torturous feeling,
Till he shrieked aloud, and swooned—
He awoke! Large drops were stealing
Down his brows, from dread fear pruned.

It was over, and his senses
One by one to him returned,
Like the dawn at morn commences
When the drowsy night is spurned.

Was the dream a faithful vision?
Was it but a hideous lie?
Had he made a wrong decision?
Thus the answer in a sigh

Came to him then, unseen wafted
On the wind: "Arise, avaunt!
What in dream thou hast seen drafted,
Is not really Satan's haunt.

I who speak thus, am thy reason;
What thou hearest, is not voice;
Thy resolves have been in season:
Thou hast well revealed thy choice.

Go in peace, and fear no danger;
Soon will all appear thee light,
For as yet thou art a stranger
In this dark and unknown night."

And Armillus, heart aflutter,
Fearlessly his way pursued;

To his reason thanks did mutter,
With a sense of glee imbued.

—:o:—

CANTO II.

THE REALITY FORESHADOWED.

THROUGH the night and desert sallied
Bold the wanderer on his way,
Wondering why the morning dallied
To outbreak in jocund day.

All was darkness; not a shimmer
Fell from the relentless sky;
Not a star there was to glimmer;
Idle winds but spent a sigh.

Whether there were heavens o'er him,
Or but some gaunt cavern's dome,
Not a sign the reality bore him,
Nothing traced an epitome

Of the truth these naked regions
Buried 'neath their sable veil,
To reveal th' infernal legions
He imagined in their pale.

Hands outstretched to grasp at bushes,
Only grasped at empty air;
Onward our Armillus pushes,
Only on, nor knowing where.

Not a patch of verdure; rubble
Only met the fleeing foot,
Not e'en stumbling over stubble
Howsoever he it put:

Only rock and stone and sandhills—
Was their ever tract so drear?
Not a sound, in frequent standstills,
Was there to attract the ear,

But that everlasting sighing
Of the lazily floating wind;
It was even still more trying
Than the death he'd left behind.

Where the end to these mysterious
Wastes to look for, he knew not;
His reflections grew more serious
As they dwelt upon his lot:

Was all hell thus ink'y clouded,
Veiled forever from all sight,
Lost in gloom, eternal' shrouded
From the far-off realms of light?

Was no incident or danger
To relieve the monotone?
And was he, unhappy stranger,
To be left fore'er alone?

Where the prophesy he'd hearkened
To, as he had entered here?
He but saw the prospect darkened
Still more deep, and much more drear.

Where was hell? Was Satan routed?
Or had the rebellious foe
Of his God for mercy shouted,
And attained the saintly glow

Once again that had been lost him
When he sinned so woefully,
That had so much torture cost him;
And regained his sanctity?

Was no imp or elf or demon
There to be Armillius' guide:
Him, they called to the regimen
Of this tainted nether side?

Was't his doom to end in anguish
In this barren, dark domain,
In eternity to languish,
Hope cast off, distract, insane?

Was't his fate to roam here aimless,
In all seasons, at all times,
To but furnish weary, shameless
Plaint and misery for these rhymes,

Vain conjecture, idle queries,
Endless woe and fresh wept tears,
Where high horror struggling serries
Into moments ages' fears?

"Be accursed, ye lying prophets!
I see neither throne nor hell!
Nor e'en that extent of Tophets
Earthly priests did me fortell;

Moon-mad monks they were, excessive
Both in lust and ignorance:
Where are your domains expressive
Of the last, infernal dance

Sinners take e'er they go under,
Overcome with scorching fire;
Would, ye ministers of blunder,
Ye were here to feel my ire!

Yet there must be some solution
To this knotty mystery;
Let me have the execution
Of my work of victory."

Thus he cried. And e'er the bitter
Speech had died upon the night,
Thought he to discern the flitter,
In the distance of a light,

Vacillating and uncertain;
Yet it tore a welcomed rent
Into the infernal curtain,
Meeting his presentiment.

What was he to see? The devil,
Coming to receive a guest?

Did the vision augur evil?
Was it some chimeric jest?

Not a phantom, for the vision
Near and ever nearer came;
And he paused with indecision:
Should he stand, or flee in shame?

Flee? For what? For whom? Could terror
Rise to more appalling heights
Than he'd passed through? Nay, no error
Could there be in future sights

To face boldly. With defiance
He would see what was at hand
Now, and with astute reliance
On his courage, keep his stand,

Hell be praised! At last the mystery
Stood a chance of being solved,
And this most infernal history
In amazing plots involved.

He was to behold a devil:
What a thought to contemplate!
How much more, than all the revel
Earthly, to anticipate!

On he came; the gleam grew brighter
Till 'twas lost within itself;
The surroundings all grew lighter:
Well, how looks the hellish elf?

In amaze? Armillius started
At the unexpected sight,
At the figure which there darted
Out of the infernal night.

Here at sea was all acumen,
Here his reason stopped right short;
By the gods, the imp was human!
What meant this Satanic sport?

"'Twas a man, in plain attire,
Such as there is worn on earth,
Venerable, reverend sire,
Quite some years removed from birth.

In one hand he held the bridle
Of a fine and prancing mare;
In the rear, a fellow idle
Followed, with an ill-bred air:

"'Twas a swain with lantern swinging
To illuminate the road
As they, hoof and footfall ringing,
The o'er-rubbed ground hestode.

Suddenly the small procession
Paused, as the old master's sight,
Practiced in its dark profession,
On Armillius did alight;

And the noble beast beside him
Seemed to sight the stranger too:
With a welcoming manner eyed him—
Give the devil's mare her due!

And Armillus? Was astounded!
Nay, as if by thunder strick;
This result seemed most unfounded
He had just now run amuck.

Was he waking? Was he dreaming?
Was this earth, or was it hell?
This small group he stood there seeming
To have known before, and well.

He had often seen in picture
Such a group; and too, in life,
With no hell to place a stricture
On his comprehensions rife.

Like a flash he caught the meaning
Of it all, and blurted out:
"This comes of my constant weening
Of mad fancy, reckless doubt.

I went out to fight a duel,
Fell asleep, and passed athrough
Tortures the most gaunt and cruel,
Horror passing in review.

I awoke, and thought the living
To have left me far behind,
Straying 'round, and foolish' giving
Rein unto my feverish mind.

These I thought to be infernal
Deserts, part of Satan's state,
While still on the earth maternal
I am roving at this rate.

What a terrible delusion:
By the stars, I thought this hell!
Region of profound confusion.
Thou, Armillus, art not well—

Ha, Armillus! I that figure?
Heavens, what an insane thought!
What a chimera! With what rigor
Has it my delusion wrought.

Hell and fire! I am confounded:
This is bitter, this is sad:
Down am I by destiny hounded;
Curse the issue! I've gone mad!

Mad, d'ye hear me? Blind, stark crazy!
Oh, why met we not to fight,
And why did not Death, grim, hazy,
Take me off upon this night?"

And Armillus sobbed hysteric',
Covered with his hands his face,
Fit for consolation cleric'
As a man who'd run his race.

What a maze is not our reason
That we can go thus astray,
Lose into such zone and season
Hopelessly and far our way!

But the strangers curious' eyed him,
Knew not what of him to think,

Saw the bitter grief betide him,
Saw the giant spirit sink.

"Did you say you were Armillus?"
Queried he of reverend mien;
"The intelligence doth fill us
With delight. Upon the scene

We have long to find expected
One who answers to that name,
And now you we have detected,
May we ask: are you the same?"

"I am he you seek, if any
Such a mighty name can own,
Yet it is not known to many
That I bear it, I alone.

'Tis an hour but that I've worn it,
Given me, as strange' medreamt,
And my memory has torn it
From my fancy, when exempt

From all reason, lay I slumbering
Yonder on the sandy plain,
Most fantastic visions numbering
'Mongst my dreams there; and I wain,

Even while I seemed me waking,
Was I called thus through the night—
Ah, my senses are forsaking
Me—I beg you, give me light!

Where am I? Is this my native
Land, or some bleak foreign shore?
Why look on me contemplative?
Give me answer, I implore."

Then the aged, reverend stranger
Fixed a pair of kindly eyes
On the young, bewildered ranger,
And him answered in this wise:

"Sir, you wander; pray recover;
List acute to what I'll tell,
Listen as the sweetheart's lover
Listens when she means him well.

You have lost, sir, your direction,
And seem utterly at sea;
Have you, then, no recollection?
Is 't so much a mystery?

You were not an idle dreamer,
Anxious doubts but crowd your head.
Thought you to meet your 'Redeemer'?
Realize that you are dead!

Dead! As dead as ever mortal
Was when he departed life
On the earth, and now the portal
Death swings shut to close the strife.

You have lived and loved, and ended
In excruciating pain,
Into hell your way have wended
To revive, and live again.

With your fancy well excited,
For prophetic visions took
You the instinct that incited
You within your soul to look,

And to recognize the honor,
Greatness, and resplendent joy
Of which Fate the generous donor
Would be to her favorite boy.

And the name—much explanation
Needs it not; ambition's swell,
In your fancy's high elation,
Pointed out to you this hell,

Set your mighty spirit teeming
With the most profound designs,
Your imagination streaming,
Traced therein most curious lines.

As Armillus you delighted
To appear beyond your life,
And your bold assertion sighted
Victory in the coming strife.

You hate heaven, e'en without reason,
But you hate it! Hate it well!
And you come to us in season
To command our citadel

In full sympathy, to offer
Strife unto the Christ on high,
Come, a good but ribald scoffer
To avenge us, or to die.

That lies in your bosom hidden;
We applaud, and call it well;
Therefore are you welcome bidden;
Sir, you are indeed in hell!

Doubt it not because the region
Looks like wildland in the night,
And no mad, infernal legion
Fills it with revolting fright.

Hell, sir, is beyond conception
Of the present age of man,
Since great ages of deception
Have confined it under ban

In the minds of thoughtless people
As the haunt of woe and fire,
And the bells down from the steeple
Clanged along to add their ire

To the priests' vituperation
On these unexplored domains.
We shall win your approbation
For what there to tell remains.

And I promise you such wonder
As you never thought to see.
How you will accuse as blunder
All your wild theology!

Know that we have been here seeking
For you through this deserts' gloom,

Now your willingness bespeaking
To conduct you to your doom—

Doom I say, because damnation
Would imply a sentence dread,
But it is a fine sensation;
Gracefully will you be led

To it; graceful your submission
Will be, and you'll loudly praise
Hourly, without intermission,
The event that closed your days

On the wicked world behind you
While you bask in glory here,
Not a fancy to remind you
Of its false and hollow cheer.

Lightly will the night unravel
Which yet lurks around your brain,
And as we resume our travel,
It will please me to explain

What seems murky. But at present
Be it quite enough to know
That your future will be pleasant,
And be great; e'er greater grow.

We are slaves in estimation,
As compared with your degree;
I deliver my oration,
Sir, in all humility.

You are summoned to your glory;
We have brought for you this horse;
Interesting will be the story
Of your future in its course.

Hail, Armillus, hail! We greet you
As our master. Follow on
Where we lead you. Pray sir, seat you
Now yourself this brute upon.

Let me help you to the saddle—
By the gods, your majesty
Speaks in how the horse bestraddle
You, with such agility.

Walk? With pleasure. I'll ne'er mind it
As we have not far to go;
And the way, you'll cheerful find it
With my speech. You've much to know."

And Armillus, nobly mounted,
Entered on his strange career,
In the sequel full recounted,
If you'll lend me but your ear.

—:0:—

CANTO III.

—
THE UNSEEN UNIVERSE.
—

THEY traversed the regions nether
Nor a sign was manifest

In the night and wind and weather,
To allay the youth's unrest :

Darkness, night ; and night and darkness ;
Inky, black, relentless night ;
Gloom unfathomed, drear and sparkless ;
With defiance set to sight :

Naught but the uncertain gleaming
Of the lantern at their side
Carried by the servant dreaming
As their weary way they plied.

"Is it far?" Armillus queried
Of his guide, "to where we go?
Are we e'er thus to be buried
In this gloom? I sigh to know."—

"Gloom? Forever! Here no cheering
Sunray strays to bright our road ;
To this night there is no clearing
Dawn, another day to bode.

But let not your heart go sinking
At this sad intelligence ;
You'll soon change your mode of thinking ;
For the present, continence.

But instead of silent' wandering,
Let me teach you what I know ;
And instead of aimless' squandering
Sighs and fears, let me bestow

On your doubting understanding
What your dark surroundings mean."—

"Do, nor wait for my commanding
You to light me up the scene.

I am weary of the mystery
Which oppresses hard my brain ;
Pray commence ; I burn the history
To attend, and ease my pain."

And his guide his eyebrows knitted
To collect his scattered thought ;
Heavy effort them o'erflitted ;
Thus was its delivery wrought—

But at this point do I tremble,
And my lyre forsakes its task,
My concern cannot dissemble,
For forbearance must I ask.

O my muse, be by, I earnest
Plead ; here must I stand or fall ;
If thou here my begging spurnest,
Must I blush for shame for all.

Help me now, and I will praise thee
Though thou wast fore'er my curse ;
Into realms immortal raise thee
Will I, if thou'lt bless my verse.

But all genius finds its level
Of itself, so I'll be brave,
Sing it out, defy the devil,
Listen will I in my grave

To the verdict,—if there be one !
Stake my future on the die,
Of the obstacles I see none,
Headless plunge into 't will I.—

Please forgive my brief digression ;
I will ne'er be faint again ;
Some vague terror found expression
For a moment in my brain.—

Thus the guide begins, then ; listen,
Listen with all might and main :—
How Armillus' dark orbs glisten !—
It will ne'er be told again :

"Here we have been onward stalking,"
Thus began the aged guide,
"You on horseback, and we walking
On our journey side by side,

And you are not e'en acquainted
With your humble servant's name,
Whether it be great, be tainted,
Wear it I with pride or shame :

It is Hugon, and descended
Am I from a noble house
Here in these black regions blended
With patrician might, nor chouse

I in this bold protestation ;
Further on you'll learn to know
What the virtue of my station
In this mystical below.

But of this, sir, more hereafter ;
For the present, I'll explain,
'Midst your peals of caustic laughter,
To your highness what I wain."

Reader, note you this my warning :
Seek not too profound to be,
Or you'll find yourself but fawning
On the mask of mockery.—

"Know then that the ALL, surrounding
Sight from earth and other spheres,
The imagination bounding,
Into mighty region clears.

Planets, stars and worlds revolving
In the endless realms of space,
Though your scient problems solving,
Not the end of things embrace.

ALL 's a huge agglomeration
Of what's seen, and what's unseen,
A stupendous aggregation
Of revealed and hidden scene.

Of what eye and sense and reason
Can perceive, appreciate,
What in nature and in season
Into shape you concentrate ;

But besides, unfathomable
Realms there are, beyond all sense,

Regions light and regions sable,
Far beyond man's vain pretence,

Past the might of penetration,
Past all frail philosophy,
Out of reach of speculation,
Natural gleams and history.

What is seen, the planetary
Systems to your sense convey,
Their consistence, exemplary
Nature, and their orbits' play :

All the life in, on and 'round them,
There phenomena and sweep :
With your telescopes you sound them ;
The results are small you reap.

This responds to evolution
Which for everything accounts,
Which, with so much elocution,
Your professor boasts and flounds,

Which makes the divine existence
Of a God without avail,
And which, with but slight resistance,
Other bases does assail.

All phenomena, conditions,
He explains and proves by this,
And defends all coalitions
With this bold hypothesis.

What can be appreciated
By the mortal sense and eye,
In itself is demonstrated;
That nobody can deny.—

The invisible consists in
What you cannot grasp or see ;
Therefore, man, this age, persists in
The beyond as heresy :

Take the visible, subtract it
From the vast extent of space ;
Take all substance, and extract it
From what may your sense embrace—

And you have the great remainder :
Nature, which you cannot see.
Heretics have loud' arraigned her
As a shallow perjury.

Yet it *is*, exists ; and even
Where you are, but proves the truth ;,
So it may with ease believe
Be, what I assert, in sooth.

This remainder, its conditions
Are to earth not supplement,
But these things take their positions
As creation's complement.

For convenience, designated
Be the limitless unseen
Supernatural, and be rated
The beyond ; as 'tis, I ween.

It surpasses understanding ;
Let it be a metaphor,
Till all life has seen the landing
To this other, future shore.—

Both the states are close' connected,
The apparent and unseen ;
Only by dark death bisected,
Such as you have just through been :

Not by any transmigration
Of the errant human soul,
As by mortal's transformation
Into a demoniac whole,

Or angelic, but assuming
Once again its mortal clay,
Into life anew here looming,
Into some bright, other day ;

Rising into novel vigor,
Its existence well assured,
Meeting with accustomed rigor
Here, what it has there endured.

It is life again, existence
Under circumstances new,
Held to with the same persistence
You held on to life when you

Through the life on earth there wandered,
Giving way to every glee,
Health and bounteous reason squandered
At each terrible orgie.

It is life ! And cease your wonder,
All will soon be light and clear,
Nor mistake my speech for blunder
Till to end the whole you hear.—

What's unseen, of diametric
Opposite precincts consists,
Both whereto we speed electric'
When your sin in death persists.

One, the visible, is lighter
Than the light of sunlit day,
Lit by an effulgence brighter
Than you dreamt of yesterday.

And the other : it is darker
Than the shades of Erebus,
With its realms more dread, and starker
Than blar sin is infamous.

And each status is the region
Of the choice of will in man ;
Each unfolds its morbid legion,
Its precincts with life to span.

One is heaven, the plans of Eden,
An enrapturing paradise
Where no clouds the sunrays deaden,
Eves the shades of night entice.

And the other : you are riding
O'er its barren desert plains,

Opportunity here bidding
 To grasp great, ambitious gains.
 But not of extraneous causes
 Is hell dark, and fair heaven light :
 There courageous fancy pauses,
 Speculation's lost to sight,
 Both are thus phenomenally
 To respective habitants :
 Both 'neath their conditions rally
 Into new significance.
 Nor is hell the shade of evil,
 Nor heaven the abode of good ;
 Both give o'er to joy and revel
 As, were they on earth, each would.
 But heaven was the first known portion,
 Habitable at the start,
 Till, by a politic' torsion,
 Hell, too, gained its peopled part.
 Heaven's called heaven by plain tradition,
 Just because 'tis known on earth,
 Thence imported by transition
 Into the new heavenly birth ;
 So is hell called hell, for reason
 Similar to the above :
 Not because of different season,
 Nor out of respect to Jove.
 Things inside th' infernal portal
 Called æ as they're called on earth ;
 Matters earthly, topics mortal
 Measured are to equal worth
 By cognomen, as infernal ;
 Though a spade 's not always spade,
 And a mere mask the external
 Oft appears to what's 'neath laid.—
 Know that heaven's not merely peopled
 By a minion angel band,
 With their God majestic' steeped
 O'er them in that blessed land.
 That idea is antiquated
 To the dwellers of the place ;
 Though you gasp to hear it stated :
 Jove is of a mortal race.
 There the virtuous and holy
 Sit not 'round on rosy clouds,
 Given up to singing solely,
 Decked in white and righteous shrouds.
 Clouds there are none : only fulgence ;
 Brilliant, light, eternal day ;
 Harps are not their sole indulgence,
 Glory not their only lay.
 Nor is hell the home of devils
 Ruled o'er by a dastard fiend
 Given o'er to brimstone revels,
 From your theologians gleaned ;

Nor are souls in torture roasted
 To a Satan's grim delight,
 Chaos and confusion toasted,
 Nor debauchery his rite.
 Nonsense ! Are we drunk or crazy
 To be bred on stuff like this ?
 Ah, the intellect's too lazy
 Dogmas and the like to hiss.
 Then besides, 'tis worldly fashion
 To adore, be what it may ;
 Now an ox is all the passion,
 Now a god is brought in play.
 Let them have their stupid idols ;
 Death will teach them otherwise,
 And will place the proper bridles
 On them, clear their misty eyes.
 Follies all did we inherit
 From the earth in heaven and hell,
 But both places have this merit :
 There's no sexton, church or bell.
 Touching is the country village
 On a jocund Sabbath morn
 When the children of the tillage
 With bright looks themselves adorn,
 And in peace and relish wander
 To the moss-grown, simple church
 To be blessed and filled with grander
 Thoughts than they would elsewhere search.
 Here the heart of bard and poet
 Must into compliance melt ;
 Wretched he who ne'er, I trow it,
 At the sight emotion felt.
 But to men of sober reason,
 Weighing it 'gainst solid sense,
 Must such poesy seem treason,
 Spite of faith and providence.—
 As appreciable is hell to
 Those who dwell within its shades,
 And is heaven above, as well, too,
 Those who bask beneath its glades,
 As is earth unto the nations
 Dwelling on its mottled face ;
 Others blessed are with creations
 By great nature's ample grace.
 Here, as there, all the conditions
 Of society and life,
 Politics and erudition,
 Law and form, and peace and strife,
 All conceivable relations,
 Are all fully reproduced,
 Scenes and sights and occupations
 To their new surroundings truced.
 Heaven and hell and earth embrace one
 Field of natural history,

Heaven and hell and earth all face one
Common giant mystery :

The because, the why, the wherefore .
Of this life, this death, this all :
But we live, we die ; and therefore
We submit to nature's thrall,

Wonder why we have existence,
What its object, end and aim ;
In both spheres, with like persistence,
Press themselves the problems same.

Heaven and hell and earth enjoy the
Similar natural kingdoms three ;
Here the mineral worlds alloy the
Same compounds ; the plants agree

In their genus, class and nature
With the growth on mother earth,
Have the self-same nomenclature,
But exist in hell with dearth.

Animals abound in plenty,
Not one whit more or less strange
Than in groups mayhap of twenty
Through your plains and meadows range.

Man is not extraordinary
In the scale of nether life,
Not less stupid, nor more wary,
Not less prone to peace or strife.

There is only that distinction :
Heaven is light, and hell is dark,
Sufferable to extinction
Each and both, in chaos stark.

The phenomenon of fulgence,
Nor its absence, them affects ;
Each enjoys a like indulgence
And its wants and ends respects.

Hell itself's not known to suffer
By nonentity of light,
And its species are not rougher
For this darkness and its blight ;

They endure modification,
But no greater sense of change ;
You will note no alteration
In the whole infernal range.

But this one : heaven is the tropics,
Hell the arctics of this sphere ;
There, all summer are the topics
Wintry the surroundings here.

There, most prodigal is nature ;
Here, 'tis all economy ;
By this facile nomenclature
Things down here with ease agree.

Hence is heaven as hot and sultry
As equator-fostered zones,
And with winter no adultery
Practices. Infernal thrones

Are the similes of frozen
Bergs and monuments of ice
By an all-wise nature chosen
As hell's dowry, and its price.

But the progress of our science
Has endowed us with the sense,
With the learning and reliance
To abate its consequence,

And you'll find we live contented
In our much abused abode ;
'Tis as much, and more, frequented
Than bright heaven is e'er bestrode."

Here the guide made pause. Armillus
Answered, 'neath his bosom's swell :
"May thy frigid precincts chill us ;
By my soul, I like thee, hell !"

—:O:—

CANTO IV.

THE EMPYREAL SHELL.

INTO earnest contemplation
Fell the rider on his seat ;
Was bewildered with sensation ;
Still it all appeared a cheat.

And he fell his guide addressing :
"Much remains as yet unclear ;
It would be indeed a blessing
If I had the truth more near.

I have taken pains to hearken,
But I do not understand
Where the shades of Limbo darken.
Where breaks light upon the land ;

Where from earth is heaven located,
North or south, or east or west,
Towards the sun, or whither, rated :
That I have as you not guessed.

When I died, an angel vision
Ushered me unto the Styx ;
Since then have with indecision
I been roaming five or six

Weary hours, I know not whither,
Till I came to meet with you ;
But how I have strayed me hither,
I've not the remotest clue.

Earth and hell seemed one dominion,
Sected by a single stream,
But I part with that opinion
Since I cannot even dream

To retrace the steps I've taken
And regain the mundane shore ;

My poor senses are well shaken;
Help me grasp them, I implore."

Hugon smiled: "The angel vision
You imagine to have seen
On the brink of the Elysian
Fields, a fancy was, I ween;

And the river—what a terror
Must have been your earthly end.
That to such a curious error
You your faculties should lend.

All the rivers in creation
Can be traced from source to mouth;
Visible is their location
At all times, nor north nor south

Tell of such a stream, I wonder
Not so much that one like you
Should conceive of such a blunder
When the shades of death accrue.

For you spend your time in brooding
Over the unknown beyond
Till you finished in concluding
What your fancy did respond.

Earth's a sphere, and has no border
Common with the world unseen,
No angelical recorder
To transcribe what you have been,

Send you on your way rejoicing
To the realms of heaven or hell,
Liberate your soul, while voicing
You a most sincere farewell.

Nay, these realms have no location;
They exist, and that's enough;
Seek in vain for demonstration;
We believe much idler stuff.

Ask a faithful where material
Heavens or hells can well abound,
Stud' with rocks, and grown with cereal:
In the sky, or 'neath the ground.

When you die on earth, forever
Leaves your eager soul that glohe;
All connections with it sever,
New conditions here to probe.

You arrive in dream well shrouded,
Re-assume like blood and flesh;
And from cares and foibles clouded,
Into life you once more mesh."

"But are heaven and hell connected?"—
"Aye, for they communicate,
But there is this wall erected
'Twixt them: old, undying hate!

Ne'er would heavener be a heller,
Heller e'er a heavener be;
Each remains a faithful dweller
Of his own, adored country.

Of this you will in due season,
At the proper time and place,
Further onward, learn the reason."—
"Yet both are of one same race?"—

"Aye, as I will take a pleasure
In explaining on our way,
Which we may pursue at leisure.—
As I was about to say,

Yet there is communication
Now between us constantly;
For, in spite of altercation,
We must in some parts agree.

Hellers have no agriculture;
Plants want plenty light and heat.
They would gladly play the vulture,
Fall on us, and us defeat;

But we furnish precious metals
Which they cannot do without,
So for us their verdure's petals
Must be husbanded, and sprout.

Then, their climate makes them lazy,
And our products oft they buy,
So that these infernal, hazy
Precincts do not idle lie."

"I shall try to grasp the meaning
Of the whole prodigious plan;
For the present I am gleaning
From your answers what I can.

Tell me then, why is't not frigid
Here, when there is ice and snow?
I am not yet frozen rigid,
And the winds most balmy blow."

"We are near the heavenly frontier,
Where the climates neutralize
One another, and each blunt here
Their extremes 'neath other skies."

"Skies! Have we a sky above us?"—
Sky, if endless space be sky.
But you ask too much, Lord love us—
"Lord!"—"A memory. Pass it by."

Reader, if you've heard my warning
You will now be full' prepared
To appreciate the dawning
Of the truth from figure bared.

Seek to grasp it with all rigor,
For on that all else depends;
Catch the sense in all its vigor;
Note how truth with grandeur blends.

"Well, imagine that all matter
In the universe contained,
All the suns that space bespatter,
All the worlds around these rained,

Had an end in all direction,
And that past this end was naught

Concentrate, then, your reflection
On the comprehensive thought

That this border-line is covered
With a huge, material shell ;
There within find heaven hovered,
And without find desert hell.

That within is lit by fulgence
From a thousand flaming orbs,
And enjoying the indulgence
Of the heat which it absorbs.

While without, is heathen darkness,
And its skies are inky night ;
Precincts, wastes ; and deserts, darkness ;
Void of heat, deprived of light.

This idea is theoretic
With our scientific chiefs,
And now stands, the last emetic
Of their studies and beliefs.

And not wholly wrong they reason,
For in heaven the skies are bright.
O'er the bloom of tropic' season,
With a myriad planets' light.

What is more, the scope is boundless,
So colossal is this shell ;
Fears may be dismissed as groundless
That we'll e'er o'erpeople hell.

We have ascertained that vision
Can be had through untold miles
With most absolute precision,
Not obscured by lowest piles ;

So that we must rate stupendous
The circumference of this sphere,
Wither but a thought must send us,
Or we'd never have reached here.

The connection with the inner
Side is easily maintained,
So that the external sinner
May not be too hard'y strained,

Through immense and natural funnels
Piercing through and through the shell,
Forming long and rocky tunnels
Which have served their purpose well,

Since the method they us offer
Of exchanging ware for grain,
Ore for food ; they fill their coffer ;
And we, too, count no small gain."—

" Why then answer with sarcasms
When I bid you locate hell,
When th' infernal protoplasms
Lie revealed so full and well ?"—

" Why ? Because all contemplation
Of the kind is perilous ;
We invoke much execration
If what wrong we answer thus.

So we throw it out with caution,
As the evident result
Of a mind which too much torsion
Drew into the blank occult.

Quite as much of rhyme and reason
It contains as other lore
Which is not accounted treason
To plain sense : therein adore

Mortals a beyond uncertain,
Regency on twinkling stars,
Little do they mind the curtain
Which their sight prophetic mars.—

But enough of this ; I venture
Too much on your kind attent' ,
And must soon incur your censure ;
Better may our time be spent.

Let me set you forth how mortals,
When they quit their pigmy earth,
Enter the infernal portals,
And what means their second birth ;

What the morals that must fill us,
What the lessons it must teach."—
Wrapped in interest, then Armillus
Listened to old Hugon's speech :

" Through a wide circumlocution,
Metaphysical pell-mell,
Arrant rant and sense-pollution,
Have I now located hell.

And you will not cease to wonder
Why I should at first describe,
Couched in vague, rhetoric thunder,
A design of other tribe,

Build you up a mad conception
Of the universe unseen,
And gain credence by surreption
For a thing that ne'er hath been ;

Finally, in postscript manner,
The reality ordain,
And unfurl the proper banner :
That will briefly I explain.

The sublime truth, sudden' blurted
Out, not introduced, prefaced,
Indiscreetly left unskirted,
Rudely into utterance chased,

Most ridiculous, unhappy,
And contemptuously would sound ;
To the sluggish, well nigh nappy ;
Not to any much profound.

And the luckless, daft historian
Of our meeting here this night,
Would be hounded with stentorian
Bursts from the indignant sight,

Of which he would be deserving
Were he not to mystify.

At the outstart, readers nerving
Faculties, the point to spy.

As it is, I so considered
This from such a point of view,
Though for the result I dithered,
And my troubles were not few.

First I teased th' imagination,
Then I set it satisfied,
Making every preparation
That you should become allied

With the dignity and beauty
And the pride of the sublime,
Though I stumbled in my duty
Oft o'er most vexatious" rhyme,

"And so that to ridicule the
Climax you could never bring
O'er your heart to do, nor school the
Mind to jeer at anything.

Subjects great need introduction:
If the latter be too weak,
We condemn the whole production;
Prefaces must be unique.—

And now, this digression waving,
Let me to the point proceed
Of the mankind you are craving
Me your interest at to lead.

Man as an example taking
Of the living things on earth :—
Other souls therewith forsaking,
What their import, what their worth,—

All his birth and life and actions,
Death, and doings ill or well,
Labors, efforts and distractions:
Find them reproduced in hell,

And in heaven, which is included
When I mention but the first,
And which need not be intruded
On the realm earth deems accursed.

Man is shown into these regions,
His allotted time exists
'Midst these gloomy precincts' legions,
Entered on the hellish lists,

Till his term of life is ended
And he once again expires,
Into nothingness extended,
Past the sway of his desires.

As on earth, man here arises
To be born, to live, to die;
Germinates and aggrandizes,
Fades into eternity.

With this difference: that the mortal
Of the sod that saw your birth
Ne'er again can view the portal
Ushering him unto the earth;

With a very few exceptions,
As Gotama, and as Christ,
As Mahommed, with perceptions
Ne'er by man too highly priced.

From the shell of heaven descended
They, and saw once more dear life,
Saw, but being not befriended,
Thence returned, rid of the strife.

In the glow of memory embered,
Live these men unto the close,
But of heaven and hell remembered
They enough naught to expose.

Bear in mind, sir, that the planet
Whence you spring, is not the ALL;
With that world I but began it,
This, the tale of mankind's fall.

Nay, all space is yet encumbered,
Inside of the heavenly shell,
With a haze of worlds unnumbered
Which supply our heaven and hell.—

When on earth is born a suckling,
He attains to age, and dies,
At the gates eternal knuckling
Ere 't has ceased its infant cries,

If it fades out prematurely.
If man lives a natural life,
Floats adown the stream securely,
Makes escape from ball and knife.

Falls into a natural slumber,
Peacefully resigns his breath,
He has passed off, ne'er to number
'Mong the throng that outlives death;

He will view these deserts never,
Nor the plains of heaven's delight,
He has died away forever
Into nothing, into night,

Fled away in the eternal,
Lost in nature's mystery,
Barred from heavenly or infernal
Life; forever ceased to be.

But be his career as mortal
Shortened by disease, excess,
Violence, he sees the portal
Of his future's happiness;

To his tacit choice according,
Lives anew in heaven or hell
Where, another life affording,
He pursues it, ill or well.

Thus, may heaven be gained by evil,
Hell invaded by the good,
Virtue fondled by the devil,
Vice adorn the heavenly mood.

Good and evil are misnomers
When applied to heaven or hell;

Both precincts are filled with roamers
Opposite to each as well.

At the moment of his entry,
Man continues in his life,
And becomes his person's sentry
In the new, abnormal strife.

He, where he left off, commences
To live on as though he'd been
Vet in his old mortal senses,
Steeped in virtue or in sin,

But becomes recuperated
In each innate faculty;
He resumes life newly dated
Under our new ministry;

And his life will he continue
As if he'd been born again,
Fixtured in each vein and sinew
Subject to the novel strain;

He will live his life allotted
In his supernatural state
By the same reverses dotted,
With a like delight elate,

If he be not too soon carried
Off into the void's distress,
If he has not too long tarried
With our folly and excess,

Or been by disease polluted,
Or brought down by violence,
By his errors executed
Into the eternal hence.

Here, like bankrupts once more granted
From their failures a release,
He may yet become enchanted
With the wisdom of life's peace,

Profit by his past reverses,
Play with fate as with a toy,
And instead of muttering curses,
Learn to live and to enjoy.—

What is in him, let him show it,
And he'll reap his just reward,
Be he critic, be he poet,
Be in this or that he lored.

Here his nature and profession
Seeks he them, and they seek him;
Or he may at any cession
Of his wits change, in a whim.

Here is man, what nature made him
In his past mundane career;
And as they have there portrayed him,
They respect, regard him here.

But he may develop slowly;
Not indeed, till he's in hell;
Howe'er, we shall soon know wholly
What his worth, be't ill or well.

Thus, you here with ardor fill us,
While on earth you were a rake;
You resolved into Armillus
And exalted rank will take.

I am ordered to conduct you
To your destiny at once;
Until then, I will instruct you
In our law and custom fonts.

Ah, but see ahead a glimmer,
Watch it larger, brighter grow.
That is the diffused, faint skimmer
Of the light from *heaven below*:

Streaming out, a brilliant funnel
From a road that bends adown
Into a bewildering tunnel
Toward heaven's effulgent crown.

In the future you'll be fated
To descend to that fair sky;
Now, sir, not to be belated,
We must pass the opening by."

Wonderingly our hero viewed it
From afar, as hastened he
On his journey, and pursued it
With a new alacrity.

CANTO V.

INFERNAL POLITICS.

HUGON'S was a sturdy figure,
Shouldered broad and chested deep,
Bursting with full, manly vigor,
Still the heir to full nights' sleep.

On his brow accumulated
Lay the thought of a decade;
In the orbs still bright' dilated
Shone the intellect displayed.

Full of earnest his expression
As he turned upon his charge
Once more, without intercession,
On his subject to enlarge:

"In that light you see the reason
Why the air about is mild,
And we seem in autumn season
'Stead of winter stern and wild.

Soon will endless ice dominions
Greet the then dismayed outlook:
You will alter your opinions
Of these realms at every crook.

Frigid bergs stupendous flouted
Into the unpierced beyond,

With thrones frozen boldly mounted
From the searching gaze abscond

In the vertical, while hilly
Wildlands, without shrub or tree,
Roll along these confines chillily
Further than the eye could see

Were it light, and we'd ascended
To the summit uppermost,
And our piercing glance transcended
What may human vision boast,

And our sight were stereoscopic
To a wonderful degree—
But I wander from my topic,
Which I'll treat now socially :

Heaven and earth you must consider
As you would consider earth
Your maternal; you must rid her
Of ideas of human birth

As pertaining to her solely
And to any sister world;
Such perceptions must be wholly
From the understanding hurled.

That small earth is but a midget,
And we too live on a sphere,
With the same desire to bridge it
And the same results to rear.

Man's a state in the creation
Of the whole wide universe,
And contained in population
Where'er living things rejoice.

Therefore understand, nor wonder,
When I tell you that this hell,
Though earth, hell, heaven far asunder,
Aborigines as well

Owned as did the earth, who flourished
Long before your ancestor
Earliest his interests nourished,
And in hand a weapon bore.

Then ensued a great transcarriage
From the earth into this place,
Settling here; and intermarriage
Soon produced a mixed new race.

Men and beasts were here transplanted
After they had suffered death
There below, and here enchanted
With the regain of their breath;

For a man, 'though wondrous creature,
Is not solely soul-possessed;
Other beings of that feature
Stand in nature's ban confessed,

'Though he is so far conceived
To believe himself alone
In that, as if nature treated
Him with more maternal tone.

It is singular how narrow
Is the scope of human thought,
When man's own dear flesh and marrow
Is into discussion brought.

Ah sir, death's a mighty teacher
Of the truth so little guessed;
Like it there was ne'er a preacher.
Here, that subject is at rest,—

The inhabitants extended
First alone to heaven's fair fields,
And no souls this wild befriended,
As it mighty little yields.

But at last these saving clauses
Saw their fill of human kind
Which, through some politic' causes,
Did at last its way here find.

Earth's profane and sacred writers
Such as Milton, fabulize,
Wondrous seers and brilliant sighters,
On the truth with misty eyes.

Ere long you will solve the mystery
Allegorically writ
By that poet, and our history
Learn, as told by other wit.—

I have said that all conditions
Reproduction find in hell,
Quite analogous positions
Occupy in here as well.

So you find distinct all races
In these shades, as on the world,
And all worlds; with different faces
Lie the lands apart unfurled.

Realize that all the nations
In th' entire universe
Share our agricultural rations,
Seek to mate the self-same fere.

But our stark domains are ample,
And none ever come too late.
Taking hell as an example,
Every nation has its state.

There's America, there's Europe,
As though you were still on earth;
Such conditions well allure up
Here mankind to seek our worth.

Then we've lands from worlds we never
Heard of until mentioned here,
Held by people quite as clever
As your planet's men appear.

Their own languages imported
Have all from their sod of birth,
Here in populace consorted
Into one stupendous earth.

Heaven and hell each has its nations
Living on and dying out,

Complimentary aggregations
To all worlds' contents, who sprout

Their triumphal eras, giving
Finally to others place,
And cede o'er th' infernal living
To a newly sprung up race.

Histories of earth and other
Planets here themselves repeat,
Brother struggling 'gainst his brother,
Carnage mingled in with cheat.

Thus the Indians of the prairies
Here succumb unto the whites,
And are driven from their areas,
Plundered of their ancient rights.

Hell must wrestle with precisely
The same problems as the world,
And we get along as nicely
Here. Thus, take the raven-curved

Children of the Afric regions;
They are still here reckoned slaves,
And not one of all these legions
Us with his defiance braves.

They are brutes, and will remain so,
Servile must they ever be,
'Though America disclaims so
Barbarous a theory.—

Here a synonym will find you
For earth's every state and thing;
'Though surroundings will oft blind you,
'Tis as finger to the ring

Here as there, in all relations
Of th' entire social state,
Subject to the contemplations
Of a human critic's prate.

Take the Indian, he's disposed of,
Shot down like a rabid dog,
Dies, by commentators prosed of,
But yet looked on as a log.

Here he lives anew, is shot down
Once again, and gone fore'er,
Buried, and is left to rot down
In the earth without a care.

He is warlike, and contented
To live out his life in fight;
His incursions are resented;
The result, eternal night.

So a Mormon dies, and leaving
Wives a score to mourn his fate;
Here, his nature not deceiving,
Links himself to many a mate.

So all trades and all professions
Hellishly are reproduced;
All pursuits hold here theircessions,
Neither heightened nor obtused.

Whate'er was a man's acumen,
Worldly lot or worldly store,
His associations human
Finds again he on this shore.

We have millions who are wealthy,
Millions, too, as vastly poor;
Millions sick, and millions healthy,
In a toil or sinecure.

On this future sphere arriving,
He begins where he left off,
Struggling with his fate, or thriving,
Met with pleasure or with scoff.

But there is this great exception:
Difference have we none in creeds,
None are open to deception,
None for his religion bleeds.

Comers here attain the knowledge
Which I now impart to you,
Nor e'er visit here a college
To be told what's false, what's true.—

Names are here perpetuated;
Noble names live on in hell,
Just as much with pride inflated;
Humbler names live on as well.

Old associations fill us,
And to our old names we turn;
Why you, sir, are here Armillus,
You will in the future learn.

So you see that man infernal
Is of the same paltry school,
And is on this shell external
As on earth, as great a fool.—

As man here is amenable
To the loss of life and breath,
Heir to ills, and never able
To adjourn the date of death,

And is powerless to throw such
Off into futurity,
You perceive that there is no such
Thing as immortality.

This to mortals seems stupendous,
'Gainst all theologic' sense,
Warped by theories tremendous'
Shallow in their vain pretense.

Yet it is so, and the thinker
Will agree that it sounds right,
And will be the willing drinker
In of its correct truth's might.

But to bring this in connection
With our post-demise affairs,
Let me point out the direction
Which our politics here bears.

Know, then, that the shades infernal,
And the realms of heaven as well,

Were, are, and will be eternal',
'Spite what revelations tell,

Monarchies with constitutions,
Such as England is on earth,
But divested of pollutions
By that system given birth.

We've no faith in visionary
Perfect' built republic states,
Thought to be the exemplary
Of all human estimates.

As experiment politic',
We believe that it has failed,
And as such some hellish critic
Diplomatic' has assailed

That most doubtful institution
Of a nation's weal and peace,
Tossined then its execution,
And abridged its hellish lease.

Therein we have been progressive,
'Though you fail to see the point ;
But experiments successive
Taught us wherewith to anoint.

Man's not ripe for life fraternal
As republic' state suggests ;
That we've proved in these infernal
Limits by most careful tests.

It will come to 't sooner, later,
But that time has come not yet ;
Mankind's virtues must be greater,
And its passions be more set.

When man shall be perfect ; error,
Sin and vanity effaced ;
When forgot', the scenes of terror
Which have history disgraced,

Then let principles of equal
Rights be scattered to the crowd ;
Then, as necessary sequel,
Will in common peace be bowed

Masses 'fore the ideal beauty,
Of its order stand in awe ;
But there cannot be found duty
Where there's no respect for law.

Law must be associated
Now with regal majesty,
That our crimes may be abated
And protected, property.

For this purpose find ensconced here,
Both in heaven fair and in hell,
Monarchs powerful, enthroned there ;
And they serve their purpose well.

Socialists are kept in order,
Law is held in due respect,
Swaying to our empire's border.
Purpose stout and head erect.

Majesty's supreme regarded ;
To deride it, is a crime ;
All contempt must be discarded
When addressing power here prime.

To connect this with my saying
That immortal there is none,
I must shock the faithfuls praying
'To an omniscient one :

Know then, that the God the mighty
Whom they worship on the earth
In their adorations flighty,
Atheists regard with mirth,

Him all nations have combined in
To beseech and to adore
In the faith they are so blind in,
He, Jehovah, is no more !

He has long since been succeeded
In his enviable reign
By an heir who, 'tis conceded,
Knows his power to sustain.

Kings have followed, and departed,
On that heavenly, splendid throne,
One by one, by death e'er thwarted
To reign in all times alone.

So, too, Satan, long is numbered
With the dead ; his place is filled ;
But his memory has not slumbered ;
Into you 'twill be instilled,—

Hell, as heaven also, possesses
Its America, its Spain ;
Italy in dire distresses,
Ireland, too, 'neath British strain ;

Germany, with France to wrangle ;
Russia, to subdue the Turks ;
Austria, with Greece to dangle
After ; Scotland with its kirks ;

Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden ;
Norway with its fosses' fall ;
Hungary, an earthly Eden ;
Cuba, steeped in fight and gall ;

Venezuela, with its changes ;
Brazil, with its wooded wastes ;
Chili, with its mountain ranges ;
And Peru, with treasured tastes ;

There's Bolivia, with its craters ;
Argentine, with clouded peace ;
Paraguay, with order haters ;
Uruguay, with dire caprice ;

There's Guiana, with its peppers ;
And Granada, with its strife ;
China and Japan, with lepers ;
India, revolution rife ;

Persia, with its ancient fables ;
Siam ; Araby the blest ;

Hindoostan, with towering gables;
And New Zealand, in unrest;

Whole Australia, energetic;
Borneo, with rapid streams;
Tartary, a vile enetic;
Iceland, where the Edda gleams;

Egypt, with its ruined wonders;
Tunis, with its pirate crew;
Tripoli; Algiers, in thunders;
And Morocco, dark of hue.

And the other combinations
Of unsettled, curious man,
Lessonful agglomerations,
All on one same reckless plan.

And besides, the territories
Of the other worlds and spheres,
Teeming with most wondrous stories,
Racked with war and wails and fears.

All by like signification
Are in heaven and hell here called,
Each the self-same congregation,
Here enlarged, and there ensmall'd:

Each a province tributary
To the emperor of the whole;
All their share of burden carry
Of th' entire Hellopole;

All in congress represented,
Taxed according to their worth,
Each as much or more contented
As it was below on earth.

All a wonder, will surmise you;
So it is: a mighty truth.
Let its nature not surprise you;
Study it: you're still in youth.

You will find therein great cities,
London, Paris, Berlin named,
With their thousand faults and pities,
In like circumstances framed.

You will find your world repeated.
Thus is constituted hell.
Be it, then, familiar' greeted;
Play therein your part, sir, well.—

Sex is sex the wide space over,
On all globes and worlds and earths;
People marry, live in clover
Or disunion, 'midst their births.

Man's prone here to all the passions
Which disgrace his earthly life,
Woman to the same vain fashions,
Child or widow, maid or wife.—

And to end this brief summation
Of the attributes of hell,
For your special delectation
On one more thing will I dwell:

Its topography wants beauty,
Unless romance gives it that.
But it will yet be your duty
On this subject oft to chat.

Here grim winter reigns eternal.
Summer lives in heavenly realms.
Endless frost the shades infernal
With its rigor overwhelms.

But we make it comfortable
By cute artificial means,
And we pierce the precincts sable
With electric, brilliant sheens.

Warmth infuse we by invention;
Science lends a mighty hand;
You'll not suffer by detention
In this rugged, cheerless land.

You will praise the fates that guided
You into our friendly mid;
'That you think you've wrong' decided
In your choice, that be forbid."

Hugon paused. All things uncertain
Had become as clear as light;
Rent asunder, hung the curtain
Which had shrouded them in night.

—10:—

CANTO VI.

THE TORTURES OF THE DAMNED.

THE procession was most curious;
Hugon with his flowing beard
Giving him an aspect furious,
With his gray head proudly reared;

Clad in long and sombre mantle,
Waist enraped in narrow belt
Which unconscious' he would tauntle
As his hand it playful' felt;

On his locks a military
Hat aristocratic' perched;
In his grasp a cane did carry
Which the ground each three yards searched.

On the horse Armillus saddled,
Still in duellist costume,
On his journey slowly daddled,
Thus strange' rescued from the tomb;

And the blood as if by magic
Fled from off the spotless white,
Nothing to recall the tragic
Hell-and-horror-stricken night;

And the wound, too, was a memory,
He had never felt so strong;

All was blotted by the emery
Of oblivion, pardoned wrong.

And behind them trudged the fellow
With the lantern at his side
Sending out a sickly, yellow
Fulgence o'er the precincts wide.

All were lost in contemplation,
All was silent as a grave;
Hugon pondered o'er damnation;
And his thoughts course headlong gave

Young Armillus, in reviewing
What his guide had him revealed;
Now for what his fates were brewing
He his heart with valor steeled.

But see there, in gloomy distance
Did he not perceive a star?
And to lend his sight assistance,
Pinched his eyes to see more far.

And his orbs to utmost straining,
He beheld to his amaze
An effulgence dim, yet gaining
On the sense throughout the haze;

It appeared as though a valley
Was illuminated bright;
Onward faster did he sally
Through the great infernal night.

"That," exclaimed the aged mentor,
"Is the city whence we're bound,
Which we soon shall reach and enter,
With success my mission crowned,

Where we soon will be reclining,
And you'll rest on your fatigue;
That bright star you see there shining,
Is not far by many a league.

'Tis a light electric, sending
Beams e'en stronger than the moon's
On the streets and squares extending
O'er the site of bright saloons,

Palaces and humble dwellings,
Magazines, attractive shops,
Parks, with architectural swellings,
Colleges with stately tops;

And, in brief, the institutions
Of a great metropolis,
With its splendid executions:
Start not, sir; New York is this.

Yon faint streak we have to light us,
Silvery clear, upon our way,
Is the Hudson, a Cocytus,
On which beams electric play.

See the brilliant city growing
To the piercing, eager stare;
Thither we are hast'ly going;
At this rate, we'll soon be there."

And Armillus, eyes aglister,
Spurred the patient' trudging beast;
Brighter, lighter grew the vista
As the site to eye increased.

Here and there already houses
Straggled on the outskirts 'round;
Youths and men, and maids and spouses
Looked in wonderment profound

On the trio, as it passed them;
And the rider on his horse
With most common people classed them,
As he might at sight, perforce.

What unto the scene imparted
An idea most picturesque,
Were the lights with which they darted
On into a maze grotesque,

Each one on his bonnet bearing
Such a light to clear the way,
Too subdued to be too glaring,
Yet 'most equal to the day.—

Presently a cemetery
Met Armillus' wondering sight:
"Ah this looks not near' so merry;
Fit to everlasting night."

"That, sir, is an ancient relic,"
Hugon to his charge replied,
"We are more, and less, catholic
Than those same who here have died.

Now, we substitute cremation
For this hideous sepulchre,
Which is less a profanation
Than the body to inter.

Think of it, to give your mother,
Father, sister, sweetheart, wife,
Think of it, to give your brother
To the worms at end of life,

To the earth to rot and moulder,
For a horrid thing's repast—
How much better were the older
Rituals at sad friends' last

Duties to the dear departed:
They destroyed the corpse with fire,
With surroundings broken-hearted
At an incident so dire,

Bearing to their homes the ashes
Guarded with most reverent pains,
And the tear-drop fondly dashes
On the passed-off one's remains

There before them: and they, knowing
That the dust has come to dust,
Think of him with bosom glowing
With endearment, not disgust."

Thoughtfully Armillus entered
That old city of the dead,

With his interest sadly centred
On th' inscriptions which he read,

Writ in English on the marble :
And he noted many names,
Studied out the curious garbel
'Neath them cited to their fames.

Here were names on earth most noted,
With their whole posterity
Which the crumbling tombstones coated,
Known to no eternity.

Here the graves no heaven suggested,
Nothing but material clay,
In no future status vested :
'Twas a tale of yesterday.

Silently they left, and wended
To the city's heart their way,
Which in brilliancy extended
'Fore them there in bustle gay.

Curiously the people eyed them
As they met them on the street,
Some with eager questions plied them,
Others passed them grave and fleet.

What a world, this hellish city,
How familiar every sight ;
Here an object worth their pity,
There a scene affluent, bright.

Men and women thronged together,
Wrapped in costly stuffs and furs,
Flying through the bracing weather ;
Beggars, officers and curs,

Carts and carriages and horses,
Followers of every trade
Going on their daily courses,
Life and energy displayed.

There was vanity and fashion,
Business, pleasure and array,
Misery and joy and passion,
Earnestness and woe and play,

Semblances of patient duty,
Pictures of diverse pursuit,
Wealth and struggle, age and beauty,
Characters of all repute.

There were avenues and highways,
Streets and lanes and parks and squares,
Gloomy terraces and byways,
Lit up, lively thoroughfares,

Theatres, and shops where busy
People thronged the bright *trottoir*,
Museums, gilded halls where dizzy
Mobs indulged in *rouge-et-noir*,

Vile and innocent diversion,
Festive halls and gay saloons,
Great bazaars in light-immersion,
Palaces with rich festoons.

And on other hand were squallid
Homes, and doubtful, low retreats,
Hurried through by faces pallid,
Scourged with scars and anxious pleats.

Hugon led his charge in hurry
To a splendid, bright hotel,
And escaped the flight and flurry,
And the city's mad pell-mell

There a *suite* of chambers festive
Waited for the guests' command,
Where Armillus, flushed and restive,
Vainly sighed for Morpheus' hand.

Out upon the streets the violent
Glare and flutter came to end,
And the city lapsed in' silent
Peace, for further strife to mend.

In the morning,—thus accept it—
Life was everywhere renewed,
And th' electric lights o'erleapt it
With refulgence motley hued.

By his bedside, at his rising,
Found Armillus rich attire
Which, without their source surmising,
He put on with great desire.

He was pleased at the reflection
As he glanced into the glass :
"What a smiling resurrection !
What may not all come to pass !"

All was modern, fashionable ;
Gallant was the cutaway ;
And tonsorial artists able
Brought his graces into play.

Then a breakfast fit for princes,
And a fragrant cigarette,
While the guide his charge convinces
That he need o'er nothing fret.

Then there came the morning papers
With their complement of news,
Full of scandal, crime and capers,
Sport and speeches, to amuse ;

Rumors of impending fighting
'In some savage province far ;
Editorials on the righting
Of the sins which home-scenes mar.

And while reading, it was stated
That a magistrate below
Their convenience there awaited ;
Hugon bid them up him show.

And Armillus was required
To give answer to his quest,
As the state of him desired
As its new and welcome guest :

"Name the planet whence you issue,
And the sod that gave you birth."—

"An American by tissue,
From the little mother Earth."—

"What the age when death o'ertook you."—
"Years I number twenty-five."

"What your worth when breath forsook you."—
"Nothing; I could never thrive."—

"What, then, was your occupation?"—
"Sir, I was a gentleman."—

"What was your denomination?"—
"Atheist, beneath the ban."—

"What your name when there you flourished?"—
"Pon my soul, that I've forgot',
For a new one have I nourished
Since I touched upon this spot.

"Tis Armilus, and no other.
That, I trust, sir, will suffice."—

"Quite so. Had you sister, brother?"—
"No, I had not such a vice."

"Were, when you passed off, you married?"—
"No, I never could me wed;
Once such an idea I carried,
But the maiden long is dead."—

"Have you any expectation
Of what you expect to do?"—
"Mistily. My occupation
Is, methinks, known but to few."—

"Have you debts?"—"Some ten or twenty."—
"Are you in a mind to pay?"—
"Yes; I'll soon have money plenty.
Hugon will not say me nay."—

Then, with proper salutation,
Bowed himself the justice on;
There ensued a conversation
On some questions of some doubt:

"Now sir, you've become a heller,
And are fully naturalized;
And, as this hotel's high dweller,
You will soon be advertised.

Look about you, note the people,
Note its customs and its ways,
Note the city void of steeple,
Time all nights, with naught of days;

Note its social ties and passions,
Note how they with earth agree,
Note their pleasures and their fashions,
And, too, note their misery.

Note the features truly human
In their daily life displayed,
Note the status of fair woman,
Note the culture here essayed.

Grasp the link that holds all persons
In this whole society,
Note th' effects and the incursions
Of this and that theory.

And then ask, how to reform it,
How to do away its ills;
And the evil, how to storm it,
How to stay its aches and chills.

I can see disdain expanding
O'er your features when you look
On humanity, demanding
Ills removed you cannot brook,

And I answer that our nations,
And societies as well,
Are as perfect in gradations
On all earths, in heaven and hell

As they can be, in their actions,
Principles, morality,
Institutions and attractions,
And in their philosophy.

Take one social factor: could you
Change it sudden' on the spot
To one better? And sir, would you
Cut out, or erase, a blot?

If man's methods are still wanting
Perfect knowledge, why despair?
How would you enjoy my taunting
"Though you grasped from out of air?"

Man's as perfect as he should be,
And methinks, is doing well;
If not struggling, he ne'er could be
Half as far, I'm free to tell.

Time will yet see man the master
Of all knowledge and all spheres,
And that day is coming faster
Than you think, I have no fears.

Man has sins and hideous vices,
Some in hand and some on shelves,
Some with happily passed-through crises,
But they punish all themselves.

Let me show you that the errors
Which into foul yell you crammed,
Manifest are here as terrors,
And as tortures of the damned;

Let me show you how they offer
For each sin a sacrifice,
How they shriek and burn and suffer
For each hellish, cursed vice;

Mother Nature, vigilante,
Notes and punishes sins well,
Reproduces here what Dante
Showed us in his horrid hell.

In this human folly's medley
You will note at every stride
They own seven sins and deadly,
And the first of these is pride.

See the proud their way pursuing
Till they suffer serious fall,

Bitterly their pride then rueing,
For the fall of pride is gall.

Next comes envy, loathsome feature
Of the countenance of the heart ;
Note the sufferings of the creature
That has played with that its part ;

Note how hatred marks distortion
In their purity of soul,
Note their miserable portion
To the very end and goal.

Note the wrathful, with what shrinking
Fellows look upon that sin,
E'er avoiding it, and thinking
They have well escaped its din.

Then, sir, note the avaricious,
What regard hold they in man ?
They are shunned as something vicious,
And are placed beneath the ban ;

People dare not think to offer,
For they grasp at things at once ;
Closed to them is every coffer ;
One in vain for credit hunts.

Take the gluttons, note the tortures
They for their delight endure ;
Yet the humble and the courtiers
Vie to play the epicure.

Let me mention the lascivious,
Note the consequence there ;
Their conditions, note how grievous ;
What a fright, the load they bear.

See the violent, how carries
Every act of theirs to fruit ;
How unhappy, if one marries,
What repentance there's to boot.—

Note how murder ends on gallows,
Suicide in black despair,
What the breakers, rocks and shallows
They encounter, wreck on there.

Note the world of fraud conductors,
How they battle for their gain ;
Note the woes of the seducers,
How their lives with care they stain.

See those idle, wily chatterers
By their folly tossed and wrung,
Miserable, hunted flatterers,
What they suffer with their tongue.

See the misers, how they tremble
When in jeopardy 's their gold,
How they're tattered, and dissembled,
How they run now hot then cold.

See the barterers, how they're rated
By disdainful fellowmen.
Hypocrites, how execrated ;
None will stoop to deal with them.

Mark how thieves are shunned and branded.
Quaking at their every turn.
Evil counselors, how handed
By all men who them but spurn.

Then behold of war the leaders,
What they in their doings bear ;
Those unsightful discord-breeders
Of damnation get their share.

Worse than thieves and graceless liars.
See the fate of that cursed class
Whom we know as falsifiers,
What misfortunes they amass,—

And from simple fraud descending
Into blacker treachery,
Note how night and horror, blending,
Trace out their ignominy.

See this Caina 'mong the mortals,
How the papers with it teem ;
Note how deep down are the portals
In great Allighieri's dream,

By the dreadest demons hindered
To remain a space in peace ;
Those who would betray their kindred,
Get from sorrow no release.

See the Antenora swelling
Through our nation's history ;
Wretches vile their nations selling,
How they eke out terribly

Chastisement from their historians
Who eternally defame
These accursed Antenorians,
And hold out their blotted name.

Note the Ptolemaea spreading
Further through the universe,
Guest-betrayers rashly wedding
With a recking, shameful curse ;

Hunted, and by flight eluding,
One remains an outcast e'er,
O'er his treacherous misdeeds brooding ;
And if trapped, the noose his share.

Such betrayers have no Mecca
Where in prayer they find relief.
Who would join the drear Judecca ?
Its fell woes are past belief.—

Thus the hell, in which you're living,
Is with equal terrors rammed,
And the heads I here am giving,
Are the tortures of the damned,

Which with their intense dread kill us.—
But enough, we must be gone ;
Mepha waits Arouse, Armillus,
We must be there ere next morn.

Off to Paris, hell's bright centre,
To our sovereign beauteous queen,
Where in pomp, sir, you will enter,
Hero of the splendid scene.

It is she who summons to her
You, Armillus, her *premier*!

Go, and of her favor woo her;
Go, and bless the coming day.

You'll admire her fine acumen,
And will praise her beauty well;
Sir, the devil is woman!"—

"Let us go. A splendid hell!"

THE END OF THE INFERNAL REALMS.



BOOK III.

THE INFERNAL HISTORY.

CANTO I.

THE CHARACTER OF THE BLESSED.

THE mind is great that flashes scorn
On evil, wrong and error ;
That visits sense, from duty torn,
With deep and awful terror :

The heart is great that bleeds at sight
Of loathsome prostitution
Of quality, of thought, of right,
And beats for retribution :

The soul is great that swells alarm
When morals meet prostration,
And antidotes the ruinous harm
With scathing condemnation.

But oft, appearances delude,
And, 'neath unsightly rubble,
The gem appears, while brightly-hued
Phantasm bursts, a hubble !

So greater far are those who probe
The motive of each action,
And view the progress of the globe
With care, and not distraction ;

Who sort from seeming right the true,
Who see the sense of folly,
The romance of a rugged view,
The glee of melancholy.

All is not vile that will not rhyme
With one's own sense of duty,
Nor is the standard of one clime
Another's mete of beauty.

Where one thinks this is right, that wrong,
A thousand will take issue ;
Delusion may be ere so strong—
Its fabric is a tissue.

As weeds oft flourish in the sand,
So chastisement will nourish
The evil it is meant to brand ;
And waste and riot flourish.

But weeds ennoble oft in sod,
And flagrant coarseness mellows ;
A heretic may turn to God
When taken from his fellows

'Tis better, in an estimate
Of man, to judge him lightly
Than to repent, and that too late,
He has not been judged him rightly.

In acts we do, in thoughts we bear,
In exercise of reason,
Let all our justest judgments e'er
Sweet charity rich' season.

So would I have ye judge my song
Until to end ye've read it ;
Then cry it right or cry it wrong,
With praise or censure wed it.

Then damn it ye that have been struck
With its unorthodoxy
Of modern sentiment, and pluck,
In person or by proxy,

Its stinging brambles from the stem,
And hold to execration,
To scorn, ignominy up them,
And heap them with damnation.

And I will smile to see the rage
And horror I've inflicted—
But until then let persiflage
And war be interdicted.

Don't sneer at every sentiment
That meets not your approval,
But let a patient temperament
Be till then your behoval.

Full opportunity I'll give
For rapture and for wonder ;
And while ye flare and choke and grieve,
Spare till the end your thunder.

Appreciate in all its might
The hatred that I bear ye ;
And when I've finished what I write,
To conflict will I dare ye.

And ye that love me for my strain,
And gather 'neath my banner,
My errors meet not with disdain,
Nor mind my clumsy manner,

But follow me unto the end ;
Forgive my uncouth fashions ;
Your patience and attention lend,
And tolerate my passions.

I must avenge a bitter wrong,
And may be oft prolific;
But I must manifest e'er long
That it will be terrific,

The vengeance that I have prepared;
I might have been so happy,
Elysian joys I might have shared:
But now my spirit's nappy,

My mind a cloud, my heart a wreck,
My life a mad distraction,
My best emotions held in check
By galling stupefaction.

I look about me, and I see
How beings tender' ningle
Their happiness and misery,
Until my cheeks hot' tingle.

I cast my eyes on chastity,
On rosy youth and beauty,
And feel my heart's blear poverty;
'Twas broke' while yet on duty.

And they that brought this break about
With their fanaticism,
That put my paradise to rout
With spiritualism,

They, and the brethren of their class,
Must pay me, aye, and doubl'
For all the hours they made me pass
Of torture, tears and trouble.

I will not spare one sacred thing
They hold to, but provoke them
With epithet and vicious fling
Until my scorn shall choke them.

And who are *they*? Not ye that ask,
For those I mean will know it,
And will severely take to task
Me, the infernal poet.

But I will meet them with my verse
And show that I write reason,
And science will avert their curse
As calumny and treason.

And now, forget what I have said;
Let harmony yet fill us;
Ye have but very little read;
Return we to Armillus.—

He and his guide the city left
By rail, checked through in sleeper
Of no improvement earthly 'reft,
And plowed Inferno deeper.

The air without was bitter' cold,
And lights illuminated
Long tracts of icy bergs untold,
And snow-drifts unabated.

Within, the travelers sat in ease,
To destination whirling,

With various' measured energies
Blue clouds of smoke unfurling.

And as they sat, the guide began
His history detailing;
With interest stud' the story ran,
The other high' regaling:

"On earth, for that is whence I sprang,
I proved an idle fellow;
My father at my earlaps rang
Till they were worn and mellow.

We lived in south of sunny France
In plenty and in clover,
But I did not have many a chance
To get me half seas over.

My father held a bishopric;
And, with his endless preaching
And argument and logic' trick,
Went on his faith me teaching.

He won me to his own belief,
In which none was sincerer;
Nor have I seen a Jesuit chief
Who held to it severer.

He brought me up to serve the church,
And I was cloaked in season,
Until I left it in the lurch;
It broke his heart, my treason.

The old man left me all his worth,
For I had ne'er a brother;
And laboring heavily at my birth,
Was too much for my mother.

I threw my rosary away,
Was excommunicated;
My heritage became their prey,
And I was foully rated.

I turned my heel upon the scene
And drifted into science,
And climbed upon a twiglet green
Through my astute reliance,

Into the French Academy,
Where I had bread and leisure,
And paged me through philosophy
To my content and pleasure—

Until, one day, I met a priest
Whom I most fondly hated,
And who had long years never ceased
To have me execrated.

We had an argument or two
On faith and health and weather,
And both of us vehement grew
As we stood there together.

He hurled the vilest epithets
Upon my head devoted,
And dealt me out some hideous threats
Of hell not sugar-coated.

The argument got out of joint,
And I got out of patience,
And brought him much too sharp a point
To keep up our relations ;

The point was steel, and I was frown'd,
But soon thereafter dangled
From lofty public gibbet down,
And died of being strangled.

I came to hell I know not how,
And set up for assessor,
But to superiors would not bow,
And so became professor

Of physics and of chemistry
In some infernal college
Where I obtained a high degree,
And wondrous wealth of knowledge.

The chancellor died, and me they chose
To fill his late position,
And higher in esteem I 'rose ;
The queen saw my condition,

And when there died the minister
Of things of the interior,
On me the seat did she confer
As being not inferior

To what I had ; I bowed in grace,
Accepted the portfolio ;
She dropped a title on my place,
Thus ending the imbroglia.

I added to my worldly store,—
Which is, too, store infernal,—
And 'rose in honor more and more
By ministries internal,

Until, one day, our gracious queen
An hour of me demanded ;
Her majesty, no sooner seen,
A document me handed

On which a lengthy tale was writ'
That one by fate elected,
Possessed of supernatural wit,
Was here to be detected

Who might himself Armillus call ;
He was to be arrested,
And brought within the royal thrall,
With dignity invested.

I will not now anticipate
The queen's communication,
Which she will in due time relate,
But she divulged your station

To be in future her *premier* ;
'Tis here the highest honor,
And Congress did not say her nay
To be of it the donor.

We call it Congress here in hell ;
'Tis Parliament in heaven ;

A heavener is a British swell
In all the holy seven.

You see, the difference 'twixt the two
Inimicals is curious ;
Their states are not their mortal due ;
The sense of heaven is spurious.

Those men and women on the earth
Who live to read the Bible
And other such, up from their birth,
On common sense a libel ; "

Who lay upon their knees and pray,
Sincere' or hypocritic' ;
Who fast the Lenten days away,
Abstain from life politic' ;

Who go to church, and spend their gold
On beggarly collection ;
Who ape the sheeps of shepherds' fold,
And howl for heaven's protection ,

Who frown upon the dance, the stage,
And shrink from glee and pleasure ;
Who fear a godhead in its rage,
And wait its lordly leisure ;

Whose life's a narrow-minded sphere
Of meekness and devotion ;
Who, ere they'd smile, would shed a tear,
And deem a woe a lotion ;

Who go about with bowed-down heads
In covert, sneaking manner ;
Who tremble in their very beds
When dreaming of our banner ;

Who represent the ignorant,
The obstinate, fanatic,
The ministers of wretched cant
And dogmas theocratic ;

And others of that hateful ilk
Who 'round delusion fumble,
Be they decked out in sack or silk,
Be titled they, or humble,—

All such, at their express demand,
Attain the heaven they sigh for ;
While such who live on other hand,
Get to the hell they die for.

So note the more congenial air
Of sharers of damnation,
And thank your stars that you are where
They think and act elation."

And thus they passed the time away,
Exchanging their opinions,
Engaged in narrative or play
And crossed the bleak dominions.

It went by rail, it went by sea,
Through wintry wind and rigor ;
It went in earnest, went in glee,
It went with speed and vigor

The realms athrough, until they saw
 The capital infernal,
 The centre of the night and law
 Of the confines eternal.

Armillus stepped with swelling heart
 Into a fine conveyance,
 A comfortable, regal part
 Of majesty's purveyance.

They drove unto a grand hotel
 To make due preparation
 To show themselves refreshed and well
 Upon the presentation.

They rested from their late fatigue,
 And donned a rich attire
 To join the court's *fidèle* intrigue,
 And notice to inspire,

And then set out in regal state,
 Aquaff with fortune's chalice,
 To bow before their potentate
 Within the royal palace.

Armillus was aglow, and burst
 With youth and manly beauty,
 Elate, impatiently athirst
 To do the queen his duty.

They hurried through the brilliant streets,
 And lively, splendid courses,
 In gallant style and dashing heats,
 Drawn on by prancing horses.

Unto his charge the old man said:
 "Assume the blackest feather,
 And look your best, erect your head
 When we go in together.

Remember you are more than they
 Who stand by in derision;
 Be amiable, be proud, be gay,
 Assume your brightest vision.

Then play it well, your destined part;
 Be prudent, bold, infernal;
 Inspire with love Queen Mepha's heart,
 And yours is joy eternal!"

—:0:—

CANTO II.

THE THIRD TESTAMENT.

ARMILLUS gazed with wondering looks
 Upon th' illumination
 Of miles of park and garden nooks,
 And endless sequestration;

And, in their midst, a palace fair
 In gorgeous guise uprising,

The simile of which he ne'er
 Had set about devising.

There was a maze of firs and pines,
 With snowy silver lining,
 Their twigs and curious' clinging vines
 In icy breaths repining.

The battlements and towers were ice,
 Of palace and out-buildings;
 And flashing beams of rare device,
 As if from costly gildings,

Upon the bleak vicinity
 From thousand lights reflected;
 The park's unique intricacy
 By pathways intersected.

They passed the chilly splendor through,
 Up at the portals landing,
 Where guards, in clothes of regal hue,
 Were silently 'round standing.

These bowed a welcome to the twain
 As they the portals entered,
 The interest of each guard and swain
 Upon them fixed and centered.

The halls within were rich and great,
 With decoration fangled,
 The evidence of royal state,
 Escutcheon proud' bespangled.

A chamber then received the pair,
 Wherein a crowd 'round strutted
 Of humble mendicants with prayer,
 And courtiers fortune-glutted.

Immediately they were perceived,
 A page approached politely,
 A hundred feeling much aggrieved
 These were preferred, and brightly

Old Hugon smiled, *fourboired* the boy,
 And in his footsteps followed;
 Armillus fell behind, his joy,
 Trepidation swallowed.

They stood before their august queen,
 Armillus fiercely blushing,
 Old Hugon looking on serene,
 His charge's blood hot' rushing.

Nor dared he raise to her his eyes,
 He felt so much confounded;
 Her aspect could he not surmise,
 His heart so rapid' bounded.

And Hugon took the word and spake:
 "Your majesty, behold me
 With him I searched for, in my wake;
 'Tis he, and so he's told me."

"Tis well," replied a woman's voice
 So thrilling and so charming
 That he attracted his heart rejoice,
 And feelings to her warming.

"We thank thee for thy loyal zeal,
And more, that wast successful;
We shall bethink us of thy weal:
It shall not prove distressful.

And you, kind sir, that have obeyed
Our call sans hesitation,
Be you 'mongst us a welcome prayed;
Accept our salutation."

And then Armillus fell on knee,
And grasped the royal ermine,
And pressed to lip it ardently,
His homage to determine.

And then he raised his eyes to hers
With admiration glowing,
The scion of the Lucifers
Upon, their glance bestowing.

He saw a most entrancing face
Of dark and radiant beauty,
And vowed, by every faultless trace,
To do her sacred duty.

Such eye he had ne'er had dreamt to see,
So black, so bright, so bursting
With inward fire and ecstasy;
How fell his own to thirsting!

What classic brow, so royal' set,
As white as alabaster,
That with an inward epithet
As with the gods he classed her.

How burned those cheeks, so soft, so smooth,
With color high and rosy;
How curb his gaze, his passions soothe
In features silent, prosy?

How swelled those lips alluringly—
A life he'd give to kiss them,
And die out in eternity,
Eternally to miss them.

Those raven tresses, how they fell
Upon the royal mantle—
What cup or food was there in hell
That him like these could tantal'?

With gracious smile, in stately wise,
With gentle, well-meant manner,
Her looks aflash, she bid him rise,
And took him 'neath her banner.

"Ah, beauteous queen," quoth he, "I bless
My stars to've brought me to thee
To lay my homage under stress,
And with my service woo thee.

Accept me, heart and hand and soul,
To die for, to defend thee
Unto the end, unto each goal,
Wherever thou may'st send me.

If I have been elect' of fate
Thy foes to fight and crumble,

And stand within thy service, great,
Yet am I thine most humble.

For thee would I endure once more
My death's sublimest terrors,
And wade in heaven's own blood and gore,
And count them not for errors.

Hail thee, thou fairest of thy sex,
To thee I consecrate me;
And if in smallest thing I vex,
Thou mayest execrate me.

If thou wilt give to me my sword,
In hand my shield, too, place me,
And send me thus one glance adored,
In battle will I face me

Thy enemies, be who they may,
I will so long annoy them
'Till they'll not see another day
To give me to destroy them."

And on her hand he pressed a kiss
That sent the blood fierce' sweeping
Athrough her veins in thrilling bliss,
And on her cheeks high leaping.

Thus had Queen Mepha won a knight
Who would a host assemble
To fill the power of heaven with fright,
And make its legions tremble.

And Hugon smiled upon the pair;
His presence well might 'reave them
Of liberty and tender air:
He bowed salute to leave them.

She gave her train a royal sweep
With lordly, gentle vigor,
And into cushions soft and deep
Reposed her graceful figure,

And motioned to the fluttering youth
To seat himself beside her,
Which he obeyed her quick, in sooth,
With love-looks to betide her.

She tinkled on a silver bell
And called for fruit and sherry,
Nor needed he her words to tell
To be him fast and merry.

"Armillus," quoth the lovely girl
Who bore the crown infernal,
"I thank thee thou art not a churl
Within, nor yet external'."

And blushed to say it, while he met
The glass she high uplifted;
And he, his rapture still to whet,
Her own with full eyes sifted.

"Here's to the future, may it prove,
My queen, an age of pleasure;
May fortune e'er success behoove,
And we enjoy 't at leisure.

And may you realize and learn
The homage that I bear you,
The sentiment with which I burn,
To equal which I dare you."

And he bestowed a blazing glance
Upon the lovely creature,
With blush and shame yet to enhance
The glory of each feature.

They sat and chat', and looked a world
Of meaning and of feeling;
A hurricane of passion whirled
Into a soft congealing.

And when they 'rose, he burned of her,
And she of him, distracted';
Affection stopped not to aver
Its fervor, nor protracted

In bashfulness its backwardness,
But spoke with loud assurance
From eyes that gleamed with wickedness
And passionate allurance.

"And now," quoth she, "but follow me
To my communication,
So that there be no mystery
Between us, for your station

Must be determined in the hour,
For so, sir, do I will it;
Impatient' will the time devour
I e'en until I fill it

With romance of your noble birth
In history's extension,
Which you knew not while you on earth
Yet suffered your detention."

She led the way into a hall,
Of his attention certain,
Since she so exercised her thrall;
And pointed to a curtain:

"Behind that stands a massive plate
Of rarest, whitest marble,
Which sacredest of things I rate,
And what it bears in garbel.

Know then, when Satan lost his cause,
Retired with his legions,
And made his long and bitter pause
In these infernal regions,

Upon this marble slab he writ
A prophecy for certain,
In terms of brevity and wit——"
She tore aside the curtain;

"Read for yourself!"—Armillus read:
"My fall, to fate impute it;
Historians will with lie it wed;
Armillus shall refute it!

So when he comes, then tremble, Christ,
Or ye of his succession;

He will avenge me, and high-priced
Will be his intercession.

And ye that follow me in reign,
Receive, adore and hail him,
And let the highest be his gain;
With honor high regale him.

What follows that, I may not know,
But tell him that I love him,
For he will Jove's destruction sow,
And place himself above him."

Armillus turned away, and frowned
With sternest resolution:
"Aye, Lucifer, and I'll be crowned
Thy scourge, thy retribution!"

And then he bowed unto his queen:
"I thank you for this showing,
For this inscription that I've seen;
For true', 'tis worth the knowing.

I'll be your ancestor's best friend,
And be yours too, to measure;
You my perceptions, power lend,
And be your slave, your pleasure."

And Mepha caught his raving eye
Aburst with love, and kindled;
Alas for maiden modesty:
Into a naught it dwindled.

He caught her in impulsive arms,
Her wild to bosom straining,
He clasped to heart those splendid charms,
Their sweet ambrosia draining.....

And when they parted for the night,
It was in mellow sorrow,
Expectant of the dawning light
Of promising to-morrow.

The morrow came, and with it brought
A scene of regal splendor,
In which Armillus, sense high wrought
Met Mepha, she to tender

The emblems of official state,
Before the court assembled,
To him, with dignity elate
And passion well dissembled.

And when 'twas done, and he the oath
Of office had him taken,
They left the throne-hall, happy both
To have the throng forsaken,

And sought a refuge where they might
Pour out their young affection,
Enamored of each other's sight,
And fearless of detection.

And when they'd cooed till either knew
The other's heart, requested
Armillus of his queen to shew
In what her past was vested;

To tell him of the history
Of matters thought eternal,
To open out the mystery,
The tale of things infernal,

The narrative of time and space,
Of man's birth, of his sinning;
The features of the struggle trace
To end from their beginning.

And she most willingly complied,
For to her woman's graces
She familiarity allied
With circumstance and places.

And we will follow what she tells;
I pray for your attention,
And I will weave ye wondrous spells
Of interest and invention.

Armillus lent a willing ear,
And marveled at her story;
So may ye marvel when ye hear
The tale of Mepha's glory.

—:0:—

CANTO III.

THE NEW GENESIS.

QUEEN Mepha owned extensive store
Of cosmic erudition,
Of history and ancient lore
Devoid of superstition.

She had been taught philosophy
In an infernal college,
And could surpass the mastery
Of petty human knowledge.

In common with the lowest serf,
The problem of all ages,
The origin of blooming turf,
And life in all its stages,

The starry maze, the heavens blue,
The miles of restless ocean,
The meadows laughing in the dew,
The zephyrs in their motion,

The towering mountains, great cascades
Of rainbow-tinted waters
In fury lashed on rocky blades
In foul Charybdean quarters,—

Knew she. And much beyond all this,
To her by sires related
Who set forth their hypothesis
Of things emphatic' stated;

Nor proudest intellect on earth
Of educated woman,

Of most aristocratic birth,
Could equal her acumen.

She spoke delight, and breathed love
When so it pleased her humor,
All idle slander far above,
Beyond the reach of rumor;

Or she could prattle on all things
Divine, infernal, mortal;
Deal out the most sarcastic flings,
Yet stop short at the portal

Of vanity, her steps retrace,
And shine at home resplendant,
A worthy scion of her race,
Of Satan the descendant.

And when she oped her lips to smile,
She won all hearts about her;
Her enemies ne'er saw her guile,
Nor could they stop to doubt her.

And when she knit that classic brow
In earnest meditation,
She hushed a riot, quelled a row,
And won o'er detestation.

And as she now began to speak,
It seemed no condescension;
Yet he beside her felt so weak,
And list' with wrapt attention.

She spoke as I can ne'er repeat,
With sense and animation;
To hear her, was a royal treat,
Without exaggeration:

“The oldest records they possess
On earth of the beginning,
What some in Christian faith profess,
Although their ranks are thinning,

Are found contained, in book and verse,
In a divine-called Bible,
Which would me for my precepts curse
And hold me for them liable.

Therein 'tis writ that world and sky
Are wonders of creation,
A sacred, hallowed mystery
Beyond our penetration.

And yet the truth lies bare and clear,
Nor hiding from detection;
In evolution find its gear,
In natural selection.

Begin we then where time began
To work its ancient wonders,
And let us thought and reason span,
Defy the church's thunders;

And fly with me from narrow thought,
From would-be wits and sages,
And learn what common agents wrought
In untold, misty ages.”

But here I bid you pause a while,
 You rash and careless reader;
 Here is a stone that marks a mile;
 Read slow', and try to heed her:

"Then know that in the womb of time,
 Beyond the first beginning,
 Before there was a zone or clime,
 Or thoughts of mortals sinning,

There was a blank—a mighty blank—
 Of nothing! Note my meaning.
 There was no life, no file, no rank,
 No stirring and no weaning.

All what you may of things conceive,
 Was absent; no perception
 Was there into this blank to weave
 By fancy or surreption.

There was no void, there was no space,
 There was no realm chaotic,
 No things to mend, no mist to face,
 No life, no germ exotic.

'Twas nothing. Think, and you are lost!
 A nothing is no vision;
 It *is* not even; 't has no cost,
 No measure, no precision.

It was no ether, was no air,
 It lacked qualification;
 It bore no fruit, it owned no share,
 It had no emanation."

Then did a God step forth to make
 A plan for system-building?
 Establish earths, with moons in wake,
 And suns to lend them gilding?

A wretched thought! How darkly plod
 These men in narrow folly!
 Can out of naught proceed a God?
 It makes me melancholy

To think that in the face of truth,
 As taught by evolution,
 A faith should live to lend, in sooth,
 Our living its pollution.

No, no; the fact may yet be hid,
 Or yet be theoretic:
 All theory I welcome bid,
 'Though thought to be heretic,

Before I give to faith my ear,
 Before I stoop to praying;
 A few short years will make it clear
 Past hooting and gaisaying.

Until then let us speculate,
 Account this faith a treason
 To common sense, and boldly state
 Cosmology in reason.

Let her proceed: "The human mind,
 To certain workings narrowed,

Cannot conceive a naught, and find
 The mental pulse unharrowed

By struggles for the sober sense
 Of clear, conceptive vision,
 But in such reasonings must commence
 With doubt and indecision.

A naught is nothing, yet's embraced
 In everything—how say you?
 I seek to have the bottom traced,
 Nor will with words betray you.

Were there not everything, we could
 No nothing have; for, clearly,
 All things were in a curious mood
 If everything were merely

A part of all. This nothing, then,
 Of everything a part is.
 It cannot go beyond your ken
 That this of all the start is,

But 'everything,' with 'nothing' classed
 Within its comprehension,
 Must be of particles amassed,
 Have nature and extension.

All things have pores, interstices,
 And 'nothing' 's no exception;
 So nothing with its pores agrees,
 Though hazy the conception.

Interstices, 'though rifts so small
 That they cannot be sighted,
 And oft beyond the fancy fall,
 Are yet not to be slighted.

So little so that they comprise
 The alpha of all action,
 And 'though with comprehension vies
 The thought, 'tis not distraction.

These pores infinitesimal
 Then might be, or prodigious,
 Yet there they were—'though criminal
 Seems this to the religious.

These pores took heart, and burst their sphere,
 And battled for extension;
 The 'nothing' fled as if in fear,
 And offered no prevention.

In infinite time, to infinite space
 Grew out these pores with vigor;
 They vanished in the boundless trace
 Of universal figure.

But mark that space not mere extent
 Implies; that were a fiction;
 You may not catch my words' intent;
 It beggars my description.

Of 'something' the extent is space,
 Not 'nothing,' or not spacious
 At all extent would be, nor place
 Would be for aught that's gracious.

That something which extent then filled,
Or filled all space, extended
Through all extent, spaced space, was milled
A thing that much portended.

That something's known by various names,
By ether, or by other
Much vaguer tides, mistier frames,
The fancy's breath to smother.

I'll call it simply hydrogen,
And suffer your objection,
And rest me on my feeble ken
For mercy and protection.

So that, when infinite years had chased
Eternity on further
A lazy step, the future based
Stood, fashioned by the birther

Who was not God, but simple law
Of natural creation;
See how the frosts of ages thaw
Beneath our penetration!

The atoms of this 'something' massed,
A mobile fluid forming,
The furthest frontiers' lincs surpassed,
In lively motion storming

For change of place and change of scene,
And constant intertumbling,
In noiseless strife and subtle spleen
Upon each other rumbling,

Until the atoms streaming curled
In ordersome rotation,
To aid in building up a world
In this immense creation.

And in an infinite space of time,
These atoms changed their nature;
By inci-accident and clime,
They changed their nomenclature.

This atom into carbon changed,
To sulphur changed the other;
A third into bright silver ranged,
And gold became its brother:

And so forth, till the elements,
In gaseous state assorted,
Became the planets' instruments,
And with each other sported.

For all the elements have sprung
From common base parental,
As they would tell had each a tongue,
And each a talent mental."

Here Nepha paused. Armillus said:
"Your argument is novel,
Yet is 't not with conviction wed';
For my consent you grovel.

At first you ask me to conceive
A nothing not e'en spacious;

And then you ask me to believe
A consequence audacious,

Which I audacious call because
If space were not existing
In nothing, then you now must pause
The contrary persisting;

For space at last is space at first,
And spacious is like porous;
You have been blinded by your thirst
For knowledge; and in chorus

Will sages overthrow your scheme;
Your logic is unhealthy;
Your premise seems an idle dream;
Your wit alone is wealthy."

"Armillus, speak not hastily,"
Him warned the glorious woman,
"This question's simple majesty
Appalls your young acumen;

Nor can you hope to understand
By credence me refusing
Before you've taken it in hand,
And my design abusing.

Can you conceive of emptiness,
Of nothing, with your reason?
A thing that's attributionless,
A thing to fancy treason?

You cannot, perfectly. Therefore
Must you accept its nature,
And too, sir, if it own a pore,
From logic's nomenclature.

Can you my premises deny?
You cannot. Then accept me
The rest. Can you with logic vie?
Then have you overleapt me."

"My queen," replied the gallant youth,
"Forgive me for this trouble;
I must accept it all as truth;
Denounce all else a bubble.

For all our world's philosophy
Is, might I say, the science
Of the infinite mystery
On finite grounds' reliance.

So may we argument our lives
Away in vain dissention
Of creed; no theory e'er thrives
That passes the extension

Of worldly wit and human ken;
We are so small, so humble,
We puny and vain-glorious men;
How quick' our fancies crumble!

How oft have I not listened to
A war of words, and thought me
How idly the conclusion woo
These men who oft have wrought me

Stupendous plans of cosmical
Commencement, to astound me ;
Hereafter, I but laugh me shall
At these disputes around me,

We know that we were given birth ;
To propagate, our mission ,
To live our space on some small earth,
Or supplement th' edition

Upon another sphere like this ;
But die we must when 't 's over ;
So I'll accept th' hypothesis,
And lie me down in clover.

I can endure what you me preach
While it is not religious,
And 'though your ends and fancies reach
Away in the prodigious,

So far your majesty spoke well ;
What follows, acceptance
Will find, whatever you may tell
Me of the whole creation.

Proceed, fair queen, nor on the way
Of your narrative dally,
And in your intellect's display,
Another triumph tally.'

He gazed on her with tender eyes ;
For love did he enlist her ;
He drew her out some deep, deep sighs ;
He caught in arms and kissed her.

—:0:—

CANTO IV.

AUTOCREATION.

SOCIETY : what does it mean ?
It means the world of fashions
In which each action is a screen
To lullaby the passions.

So when a man and woman meet
In intercourse profounder
Than common talk, they seize the treat,
'Though slanders fall around her

Whom t concerns ; not less divine
Is their precipitation
In love, nor less her glorious shine
Who yields to the sensation

On first attack ; this couple met
On ground far higher, stranger
That that on which plain mortals fret,
Nor was there any danger

That Mepha should be less a queen,
A virgin, and a woman ;

She did not bloom to blush unseen ;
She was trifle human.

Armillus was to her a man
To whom she was indebted
For dreams of vengeance on a plan
That her desires whetted.

So it was natural that she
Should give him her affection ;
And it was given hastily,
'Though not without reflection.

But to this interthought a truce ;
A truce to explanation,
To this apology, excuse ;
Resume me her narration ;

The way in which she said these things
So affable and pretty,
As though they gushed from thousand springs
Of wisdom rare and witty :

"I said that, at a certain stage,
The universe was ruffled
With elements in gaseous guage,
In which they moved and shuffled.

In time, a movement rotary
Became the ragged motion ;
Each pushed its fellow zealously
Along within this ocean,

Until on systematic plan
They followed revolution,
The universe with spheres to span,
And narrow their dilution.

The spheres, at first a hurricane
Of gases in rotation,
Assumed a faster, denser grain,
And won in condensation,

Until these globes were nebular ;
Then came their liquifaction ;
And soon, a shell of regular
Solidity the action

Still farthered, till the misty haze
Had burst in planetary
Completion, and the starry maze
On orbit wing made merry.

So our empyreal shell was made ;
And with it many brothers
Who envelope a colonnade
Of spheres, for there are others

Besides our own yet pigmy shell,
Vast systems proud' enclosing,
Who bear the heaven, and too, the hell
Of those worlds grandly posing

In other realms of space ; and now
Let fancy rise in vigor,
And truth, superior strange, avow,
And comprehend my figure.

You saw a system which you fail
To pierce with aided vision,
Confined in shell as if in jail;
Of all, a small division.

Now think of this empyreal shell
As though it were a planet
Like that on which your childhood fell,
And from its grandeur ban it.

Conceive a system made of such
Empyreal shells revolving
On wondrous paths; here is a touch
Immensity dissolving.

And 'round this mighty system wrap
A shell; to that we wander
If life should find too soon a tap
On this; nor do I squander

Your time with idle tales; Hugon
Knows little of this wonder,
'Though such like themes he's pondered on;
E'en sages may oft blunder.

Conceive this second shell to be
A planet in relation
To myriad others, and you see
How vast a revelation

The universe becomes; each state
Divine and, too, infernal
Unknown states to a smaller rate
Must we; these shells external

Embrace into infinity
The systems next below them.
Then realize the majesty
Of nature's products; show them

The homage which they well deserve.
Is faith not a derision
Upon the systems as they curve
Beyond all ken and vision?—

And now turn, on the other hand,
Back to the smallest planet;
Take we the earth where once your stand
You made to learn and scan it:

In it you see that nature's not
Yet finished in its labor,
For time will work its contents hot
Into a system, neighbor

Unto a smaller held within
The shell of some revolving
Yet unborn globe this system in,
Still other worlds unsolving.

Thus follow to infinity
The thread of this conception
To smallest mites, and you will be
A master in adeption,

And see between this pigmy mite
And nature the proportion—

Are you much larger in its sight?
What matters it, your portion?"—

Armillus smiled as was his use
When fallacy he sifted:
"I fear your simile is loose;
'Though I am far from gifted

With logical acumen, yet
How is it that the outer
Confines of earth in light are set
And we're in darkness? Doubter

I would not be if I could but
My way observe athrough it;
Still, why are we in darkness shut?
Why does not light imbue it?"—

"Your earth," replied with grace the queen,
"Has sun to light and warm it;
But here no blazing globe is seen
To heat our crust; winds storm it

Year in, year out, relentlessly,
Without regard for season,
With uncongeniality;
And you would know the reason?

Because we skirt our system's space;
Our distance is much greater
For suns with light us out to trace;
Mayhap they'll find us later.

We are as great as earth is small,
And greater is our distance,
In due proportion, from the ball
Next to us; the resistance

That light encounters by this space
Is too great to come over;
And so it leaves us in the race
A dark and cheerless rover.

The one faint, scintillating ray
That flies on undulations
Through darkness toward our far way,
In its peregrinations

Is lost, and does not strike our sphere:
We see no stars above us;
We have no brilliant heavens here,
No sister worlds to love us."—

"So must our hearts the want supply,"
Exclaimed the youth excited,
"And worlds must speak from each true eye;
Then will all things be righted.

But say on, love: earth has a moon
That's dead. Is it infernal?
Can I suppose that it will soon
Be but a shell external

To systems in itself contained?"—
"Nay, sir, not all eggs hatching
You'll find in nature. Is't explained?
Or do my words need patching?

No? Thank you, sir. Then have I won
 You o'er to my opinions?
 And has my mission so far done
 Its work? Nor failed its pinions?

Your looks, sir, are the best reply.
 They nerve me, and they chasten
 The spirit of my victory;
 But let us now on hasten.—

I lead you back to gaseous spheres,
 To elemental oceans,
 The automatic engineers
 Of many curious motions

Which, in the course of time, involved
 Two great, conflicting forces;
 For thus the genesis is solved
 Of nature in its courses.

The one was the centripetal,
 Which to the centre tended
 All particles to draw; so shall
 This force be comprehended.

By centres mean I to descry
 The centres of rotation
 Of gaseous spheres which sought to try
 To gain their concentration.

The second, the centrifugal,
 Which with the other wrestled
 To throw off atoms from their thrall,
 To drive them whence they nestled.

Thus were these forces both at war,
 And each in turn was mighty;
 At poles the first would reign and soar;
 Elsewhere the last was flighty.

At equatorial sides the first
 Was sure to be the stronger,
 And from the other's thrall'dom burst,
 To make the struggle longer.

So came it, then, that, 'twixt the poles,
 The spheres strung out and fattened,
 While from the equidistant goals,
 The spheres sank in and flattened.

As density increased, the force
 Centrifugal off carried
 The palm of victory; divorce
 Ensued where union tarried.

It used its fierce predominance
 To work the sphere's detraction;
 And from its body off did glance
 A ring of gas, the paction

To overthrow, and for itself
 A world to form, dependent
 Upon its mother for the pelf
 Of brilliancy resplendant.

And while the mother ball condensed
 Into a world, its daughter

A sphere-life for itself commenced;
 And thus a moon was wrought her.

But still it happened that the force
 Centripetal victorious
 Came out the fight, and so no course
 Of moon was born laborious'.

And such a sphere was this our shell;
 Its surface soon was hardened,
 And thus became what proves your hell;
 For this, it may be pardoned.

The inside, filled with mobile gas,
 Developed, during ages,
 Into your universe, to pass
 The muster of your sages."

Thus spoke the queen, and here I leave
 To rest the wearied reader;
 I would my strain no further weave,
 And be no longer breeder

Of technic' lore. From hence all know
 Their course themselves to follow
 From modern books in reason's glow,
 Discarding what is hollow.

Still Mepha spoke, and spoke so well
 That wrapt Armillus listened,
 And as he heard the queen of hell
 So speak, his glances glistened

With admiration, joy and pride,
 And bursting satisfaction;
 Here were his sympathies allied;
 Here roused his soul to action.

She spoke of elements and life,
 And drew from evolution
 The pictures of existence-strife
 With startling elocution.

She spoke of carbon as the germ
 Of all protean matter,
 And tore, in many an ardent strain,
 The Christian faith to tatter.

She dwelt on monera at length,
 On form and protoplasm,
 And threw, with intellectual strength,
 Man's errors down the chasms

Of science's late triumphs, wed
 With sympathy and vigor
 Unto its edicts; doctrine bled
 Where she advanced with rigor.

And as she spoke, with ardent fire
 High waxed the queen's recital;
 She drew religion through the mire.—
 Of life hermaphroditical;

Of life as burst in, wrought by, sex;
 Of natural selection,
 The theories divine to vex,
 She spoke with rare inflection.

She led Armillus through the maze
Of species, and expounded
The fallacy of priestly craze,
Until he was confounded.

In brief, she proved the non-divine
Progression of creation,
And made his brow to countershine
The height of her elation.

And in these words she closed her speech,
And cosmic-discourse ended :
" Each natural history will teach
How man his race extended.

And history itself will lead
You to your own existence.
That is the scope of all my creed,
For which I crave enlistance ;

The alpha and the omega
Of my sincere religion,
The mono-and-the-polyra
Of my beliefs trans-Stygian.

It is all clear, from when all time
And substance had beginning
Unto the end, when breath and rhyme
Have ceased fore'er their sinning.

There is no mystery of life ;
In the infinite living,
In the immensity of strife,
Of time its sands slow' sieving,

Of space in its continual growth,
You are a nothing, breathing
A mite of air ; a thing of sloth ;
Soon comes your actions' sheathing.

And yet, from the infernal point,
You ne'er will be a fossil ;
With rapture we your brow anoint,
For here you are colossal !"

And Mepha paused. Armillus 'rose,
Full bursting with emotion,
While hatred in his bosom froze
Against fair faith's devotion.

He smiled in scorn at thought of prayer,
The biblical narration ;
Its every point he thought a tare,
And hooted revelation.

His glance alighted on his queen
Her eyes reflective' closing ;
Your hearts had thrilled had they but seen
Her beauty thus reposing.

—:o:—

CANTO V.

—
THE TRUTH AT LAST.

I TRUST you will not judge me here
A brutal, scoffing Vandal

For what remains yet to appear,
And what is past ; I'll handle

My subject with all charity :
And if I spare no feeling,
The error will not lie with me
But with my topic, stealing

Its merciless, atrocious way
Through worlds and spheres and ages,
And standing soon full face at bay
On these presumptuous pages.

I have no sympathy with those
Against whom I am writing,
And may be often acrimose,
These arguments inditing ;

I hold most sacred what I touch,
So fear its desecration,
Nor can I stop to flatter such
As meet my condemnation.

Prepare to hear your fondest thoughts
Exposed to reason's pity,
Your truths exhibited as torts,
Defamed your holy city ;

I come to scorch, and not to scoff,
And shall not end in prayers ;
I cast all prejudices off,
And wait to meet gainsayers.

You are a sorry, wretched lot ;
At sight of you, I tremble
With loathing for your errors' rot,
And can me not dissemble.

I write not of my own free will ;
A force unseen is driving
Me on, and so these pages fill
With thoughts of its conniving.

Prepare to have your altars shorn
Of all their shallow vestige,
Prepare to have dragged through my scorn
Your living's ancient prestige.

I hate whatever you may love,
And side me with your foemen ;
I wear for you no soothing glove,
I show no welcomed omen.

Prepare to have your dearest shrines
Despoiled of consecration,
Uprooted, and their intestines
Delivered to damnation.

To work you harm, I am a mite,
But still I breathe defiance ;
E'en fleas the greatest monsters bite :
There lies my whole reliance.

I may not live to see the day
That witnesses your going,
Yet still I chant my simple lay,
Extermination sowing.—

The queen threw her reflections off,
 In memory well sinewed;
 A short, preliminary cough,
 And then she thus continued:

"Ere yet on earth had broken life,
 And its domains were steeped,
 Ere history to act was rife,
 And yet this hell was peopled,

'There reigned in heaven a mighty king,
 Well known to his descendants,
 Whose praises still whole nations sing,
 And thousand priests' dependents.

That king was Jove the Great, who ruled
 His provinces like Nero,
 His subjects into warfare schooled;
 Himself, howe'er, no hero.

It was not fashion then to take
 A mate in holy marriage;
 The women lived for passion's sake,
 And were of masters' carriage

A part, as was a house or horse;
 There was no wife, no cousin;
 Society was vile and coarse;
 A man had mates a dozen.

And so King Jove had many a wench
 His vanity to tickle,
 His morbid thirsts to still and quench;
 And every one was fickle.

His harem had two favorites,
 Dark Lilith and fair Mary,
 Who plied him with their charming wits,
 Of which they were not chary.

And Lilith bore him first a child,
 A boy so fine in feature,
 So strong in form, in heart so wild;
 And he surprised his teacher

With wondrous sense and iron will,
 And heart to greatness swelling,
 And spirit never fagged nor still,
 Of fateful future telling.

They dubbed the youngster Lucifer;
 She was his slave, his mother;
 But Jove no love had to aver;
 And then there came a brother:

A gentle boy bore Mary's womb,
 Of mien and form the sweetest,
 With air that durst no pride assume,
 With love that flew the fleetest,

And won the father's marble heart;
 He stroked his ringlets golden;
 The boy grew of himself a part;
 No fairer was beholden.

They called him Jesus, and his soul
 In loveliness expanded,

Which everywhere about him stole,
 But on his brother stranded.

They loved each other not, the boys;
 While Lilith's was outspoken
 With hatred fierce, forsaken toys,
 The other's words were spoken

In tender mood and loving art
 And sweet conciliation,
 But he never won the elder's heart.
 So stood the situation.

When still another concubine
 Of Jove's became a mother,
 And offered to her master's line
 Of royal heirs another

Beloved boy; and Jove rejoiced,
 And thanked the faithful madame,
 And on his fathership did foist;
 They called the third one Adam.

A spoiled and wilful child was he,
 And turned out craven-hearted;
 He gave himself to forestry,
 And from his brothers parted.

The palace halls were filled with noise,
 And loud and youthful laughter;
 When on the ill-assorted boys
 A maiden followed after

Born of a wench, the mate of one
 Of Jove's most faithful sages,
 As radiant as a summer sun,
 The topic of all ages.

A maiden you could ne'er conceive
 Who won so fast affection;
 You know her well, for she was Eve;
 All caught the sweet infection.

And Lucifer and Adam fought
 To win the maiden over,
 Until the last her notice caught,
 And warmed into her lover.

He swore that he would never care
 For any other woman,
 And would alone her colors bear;
 But then, the youth was human.

He sported 'round as best him pleased,
 Unto the courtiers' scandal;
 His passions to such length appeased
 That Jove reproved the Vandal.

And thenceforth lived he peacefully,
 And down in Eden settled,
 And passed his hours most blissfully;
 But Lucifer was nettled,

And in his suit the win the maid
 From Adam's side was zealous,
 And plans for his destruction laid,
 So was he fierce and jealous.

A man who such a purpose hath,
Will stop at no contriving;
And in his bold and bitter wrath
He set about conniving

How he could best destroy the bliss
Of the enamored couple.
Think you they heard a serpent's hiss,
A creature false and supple?

Nay, he surrounded her with snares
Of bountiful temptation,
And played about her loving cares
With honied 'fatuation.

And of an apple he'd prepared
To eat he her persuaded,
So that she fell to him, ensnared,
With poisoned lust pervaded.

And Adam's manly spirit broke
By poison by her given;
Another apple wrought the stroke,
And there was woe in heaven.

But shortly after this had happed,
So different' from the fable,
The girl was down, in birth-pain wrapped;
There sprang forth Cain and Abel.

And while this plot was being scened,
Of Jove's three sons the second,
With Satan's sympathies not weened,
On satisfaction reckoned.

He spied about them night and day,
And the intrigue detected;
Now Lucifer might pardon pray,
He would not be protected.

For Jesus from the garden chased
To Jove, and told his story,
And Lucifer was called in haste
Unto the father hoary.

'What is 't I hear that thou hast done,
Thou villain? Thou hast ravished
The mate whom Adam fairly won;
In vain, then, have I lavished

My kindness upon thy head.
Speak not; disgrace dost merit;
I turn thee from thy crown and bed;
Thus do I disinherit

The serpent lain along my breast:
No succor will I lend thee;
Such is my will and my behest;
Go forth, and seek to mend thee.

But drop the title Lucifer;
I have the last time named it;
Thou castedst on it naught but slur;
Thou hast too much defamed it.

And she who gave herself to thee,
Be she from Eden driven;

And he who lost her sanctity,
As her companion given.

Be thou called Satan, evil boy,
Thus ignominious' branded;
Be rape and robbery thy joy,
With lust and revel banded.'

And Jesus smiled as thus disgrace
Was on his brother spoken;
Then Satan spurned him to his face;
His spirit was not broken:

'Thinkst thou to rob me of my throne?
Then art thou sad' mistaken;
For my great fall wilt thou atone,
If th' empire shall be shaken

From end to end with civil strife,
And war and bloody riot;
Thou shalt repay me with thy life
For breaking on the quiet

Of my career with callous tongue;
Revenge you'll hear paroling,
From my indignant bosom wrung,
And thy destruction tolling.

I leave you to your triumph now;
When I return, then tremble,
For I will keep my present vow,
And followers assemble.

And father, you, who cast me off,
Have dealt with me in measures
Which will expose me to the scoff
Of idle tongues' foul pleasures.

Has not a man a right to win
A mistress from another?
Is it in our wild state a sin,
E'en though he be a brother?

He would have stole' her had I gained
Her heart to my possession,
And would with crime his hand have stained,
Nor brooked your intercession.

Your purpose I can see and parse;
I understand the hidden
Conspiracy; this is a farce;
Of me you would be ridden.

You love that fawning flatterer there;
To make him your successor,
You would use means both foul and fair;
E'en stand up, my oppressor.

But you have gone too far, I vow;
It is too weak, the tissue;
I leave your courtly splendor now;
But tremble for the issue!

I'm Satan, am I? You shall hear
That name again, your terror;
And if we fall, your heirs shall fear
The chances of your error.

Farewell! I go to meet my fate.
 Farewell, my home, my mother;
 Farewell, you faithless potentate,
 Farewell, my precious brother!

And Satan passed from out of sight
 Of home and court, admonished
 To come no more; if he we right,
 They were to be astonished

Ere long by the condemned's revolt,
 So they prepared resistance,
 And called to arms of bow and bolt
 A thousand swains' enlistance.

Full many a trusted gallant knight
 Appeared to render battle,
 And wage a bloody civil fight,
 With bundle, bag and chattel.

They were prepared, with Gabriel,
 Their general, to direct them;
 Their foes were taken care of well:
 No mercy would protect them.

And Jove gave to his son in hand
 A trusty blade, and bid him
 Take of his armies the command,
 And of the rebels rid him.

'Go forth, my son,' spake he, 'and fight
 For country, throne and reason;
 You shall be victor, as the right
 Lies with us 'gainst this treason.'

And Jesus did as he was bid;
 He heard that there assembled
 A throng, with Satan in their mid,
 Who at defeat not trembled.

The day came on, the fight was done,
 The heralds came derisive;
 And Jesus in the struggle won:
 The battle proved decisive.

And Satan fled with all his crew,
 With Gabriel pursuing,
 And many in that fight he slew;
 Much blood cost Satan's wooing.

Into these realms of cold and night,
 At his defeat much nettled,
 The vanquished went from out the fight,
 And here a homestead settled.

He often tried to win the field
 He lost with so much sorrow,
 But always had to flee and yield,
 To 'wait another morrow.

He died lamented by the land;
 His will he left behind him:
 'Armillus will resume command;
 Let who me love remind him.'

And Jove was followed by the son
 Who since the world's 'Redeemer'

Has been installed; he had his run;
 He was an idle dreamer

In all but his morality;
 That is in truth amazing;
 At his succinct philosophy
 I shall ne'er tire me gazing.—

But in the meanwhile sprang on earth
 A race whom you've descended
 Of, adding to our might and worth
 By being with us blended

As you already have here learned;
 And so a mighty nation
 Has sprung from those whom Jesus spurned
 And doomed to emigration.

I am the heiress of the crown
 That Satan has here founded;
 You may yet add to its renown
 When the attack is sounded.

In heaven, too, reigns a maiden queen,
 So 'tis not man 'gainst woman;
 I only fear that when you've seen
 The maid, you'll prove too human,

And me, poor girl, for her forsake,
 And leave your pressing duty;
 You smile in scorn, your head you shake:
 Ah sir, she is a beauty."

"And are not you?" rejoined the youth,
 "Can your charms find their equal?
 I shall prove true, and speak the truth."—
 "We'll find that in the sequel."

"Aye, that we will, for where a queen
 Reigns over those who squandered
 Below on earth the ray serene
 Of reason, darkly wandered

In paths of most preposterous hue,
 And proved in faith fanatic,
 Who noblest sentiments fell slew,
 And proved so high' emphatic

In what was rankest ignorance,
 And brutish fear and blunder,—
 Then will that queen me not entrance,
 And we two fall asunder.

I hate that heaven you have described,
 And may its queen be fairer
 Than what I ever have imbibed,
 I would not be the sharer

Of those delights that pin the mind
 On such accursed opinions;
 Another husband must she find
 To rule o'er her dominions.

Nay, nay, you need not fear for me;
 I will not fail; I swear it!
 Place on me Satan's livery:
 With honor will I wear it.

Prepare your armies for the fray ;
Great courage will I meed them,
And ere the dawn of many a day,
To victory I'll lead them,

To show the universe that I
Can tread upon the Bible,
To show the world the hideous lie
That lurks beneath its libel.

Girt on my sword, thy sweet lips purse
That I may once more kiss them,
And in that kiss your foemen curse ;
I shall not fail to miss them.

I will avenge the mighty wrong
That drove from throne and power
Thy ancestor with all his throng ;
I will cut down this flower

That rules the heaven they have usurped
For her to bask within it ;
Her songsters have the last time chirped
When war I once begin it.

And be she beautiful howe'er,
I will no mercy show her ;
No smile nor tear can make me spare
Her royal pride to lower.

Aye, she will come to grievous harm ;
Her crown shall be your feather."
They passed to dinner arm in arm :
"Nay, we shall reign together!"

—:0;—

CANTO VI.

—
VIVE LE ROI!
—

I HAVE no words at hand to speak
Of things apochryphally
At further length, and try to seek
Where this and that don't tally ;

I have no space to pour you out
In arguments the action
Against your Holy Writ, to spout
Upon its sense-infracton ;

I have no time at length to dwell
Upon the contradictions
Presented in your heaven and hell,
Upon your curious fictions ;

I could, so would I, fill a world
Of volumes on the topic
Of reason in distraction hurled :
But I'll be philanthropic.

I leave the world its faith, its church,
Its sacrament and mission ;

Some day, they'll leave these in the lurch,
And call them superstition.

The civilized on earth soon will
Be totally converted ;
It wants but little time to fill
What I have here asserted.

Among the obstinate remain
The children tressed in flaxen,
But even there, 'tis on the wane ;
He yields, the Anglo-Saxon :

He yields to Europe's trumpet voice ;
His faith but rests on fashion ;
And fashions change ; the present choice
Was, is no more, a passion.

I see the mighty edifice
In its foundations crumbling ;
I almost hear the latent hiss
That breaks out with its tumbling ;

I see the towers in ruins lie,
I see despoiled the altar,
I see its ancient prestige die ;
I see it bow and falter.

I see the light break o'er the world,
I see explode the fable
In which the faith was aptly fured ;
I see this modern Babel

Destroyed by lightning in the flash
Of truth's emancipation,
Retreating 'fore the gallant dash
Of reason's concentration.

I see all nations fraternize,
I see the sects united,
All things looked on with other eyes,
The naked truth invited.

I see the love of humankind
Affecting man and woman,
I see morality defined
A thing decisive' human.

I see proud science glorify
The whole civilization,
And former theologians vie
With atheists to station

The solemn fact of mortal life
Upon its proper bases :
I see the priest expouse a wife,
I see relax the faces

Of hypocrites, to smile once more
Upon his man and brother
In honest frankness, see them pour
Their candor o'er each other.

I see the harlot rise from out
Her filth and degradation,
The hell that damns her put to rout ;
And fill another station ;

I see the thief return the gold
 He stole ; I see the master,
 To whom the slave was bound and sold,
 Release him ; I see faster

The wheels of industry revolve,
 And capital and labor
 Upon fraternity resolve ;
 I see the tattler's neighbor

Protected from his idle tongue ;
 I see the proud official
 Of his embezzled booty wrung ;
 I see the step initial

Inaugurated to destroy
 The weapons used in battle,
 No war to break upon our joy,
 To hush our infant's prattle.

I see society reformed :
 Its shams, its vice subtracted ;
 I see its prejudices stormed,
 Its erring rules infracted.

I see the world a paradise,
 I envy me who follow ;
 And yet, I fear some strange device ;
 Mefears the thing is hollow :

For now and then I catch a glimpse
 Of chaos and confusion,
 Of darkness and its shadowy imps ;
 But hope this is delusion.

But let us see whereto we tend,
 And leave this speculation ;
 Then follow me unto the end
 Of this unique narration.

My task yet seems me but begun ;
 I see long ways before me
 A monstrous history outspun,
 So will I on, and soar me

Into its fastnesses, and seek
 The likely bloody sequel ;
 It is for you to judge and speak
 If to my task I'm equal.—

Armillus entered on his sphere
 With ardor and precision,
 And soon decided his career ;
 He came into collision

With sluggardness and with abuse,
 And with the court's corruption,
 And put his talents to the use
 Of aught but its volupition.

He charmed with elegance and wit
 And energy the college,
 And showed that he was aptly fit
 In the domain of knowledge

Of statesmanship, diplomacy,
 And daring legal action,

While most conciliatingly
 Observing every faction.

And as he ruled with subtle art
 The whole infernal nations,
 He filled their bosoms with the dart
 Of vengeance, dealt out rations

Of wrapped intent in every turn
 Of his expert devotion,
 And taught the cabinet to burn
 With his constrained emotion.

He pictured to their minds the scene
 Of Satan's fall, and lectured
 Upon the feelings of their queen ;
 He labored and conjectured

From morn till eve upon the cause
 Of heaven's fell castigation,
 And thrust in many a clever clause
 To win their approbation.

And soon the scheme was wrought, and ripe,
 And hell arose to action,
 The insult with heaven's blood to wipe,
 Resent its rights' infraction.

It needed but the call to arms
 The warriors to assemble,
 To sound the tocsin's wild alarms
 To cause their foes to tremble.

"Well done, Armillus," quoth the queen,
 "We'll put them on their mettle ;
 The time has come to make the mien
 Our old accounts to settle.

You've not in vain been called to serve
 In this our revolution,
 Nor shall we from our purpose swerve
 Until the execution

In every manner is complete,
 And they capitulate them ;
 That flaxen hussy we'll unseat ;
 O Satan, how I hate them !"

'Twas in the royal library
 The twain sat thus conversing,
 Their ancient rights and liberty
 Most volubly rehearsing.

They sought the records of those days
 To help their understanding
 Of Jove's foul means and Jesus' ways,
 And Satan's reprimanding.

"I wonder," said the youth, "how we
 The books of earth can enter
 Into th' infernal library,
 How every mortal mentor

Can find a place on these our shelves,
 When there is no connection
 Between the earthly and ourselves ;
 I find in every section

The books I read when I was young,
Each dear, familiar volume,
The songs I have so often sung,
And papers to the column."—

"That was indeed stupendous work,
And yet we have succeeded;
No time nor labor did we shirk,
And every mite was heeded.

We offer a reward for all
Who can a verse remember,
A passage or a line recall;
And thus we stir the ember

Of every scholar's memory,
And put the links together,
Till the completed chain you see
Here bound in Russia leather.—

But let us not on such things dwell
While we must soar the higher;
A troubled time awaits this hell;
We must our efforts fire.

Say on, Armillus, is it right
That you should go to battle,
And risk your life in daily fight,
While I receive the tattle

Of praising tongues, and bear the palm
Of victory you've wrested
From heaven; I cannot stay me calm
While I am thus invested."

Armillus colored to the hair;
He guessed the hidden meaning
Her words conveyed; he was to share
Alike with her; and leaning

Him o'er to catch her by the hand,
He cried: "I'm not mistaken;
I am your slave, at your command.
To what do I awaken!

My gracious queen, my dearest love,
Accept my life's devotion;
Such honors I have ne'er dreamt of;
I stifle with emotion.

What can I do myself to nerve
To take the blushing blessing?
What have I done this to deserve?
That am I far from guessing."

And down he knelt, and kissed the hem
Of Mepha's robe; she raised him;
Their passion's tide unmastered them;
How willingly she gazed him

In those dark, burning, dancing eyes,
With soul-absorption brimming,
So full of ardent, mute replies,
A tear-drop fondly trimming

Their fulsomeness; he pressed his lips
Upon her own, and kept them

So pressed, and drank in throbbing dips,
With naught to intercept them.

And then she led him forth in glee,
And issued proclamation
That she would maid no longer be,
Nor fill alone her station.

And when the word was given out,
All hell in tumult burst;
Here was the crown without a doubt
For which so long he'd thirsted.

But far from being satisfied,
High flamed his bold ambition;
And to the multitude he cried,
Wrapped up in his condition:

"I thank you, friends, for your esteem,
But I have not been chosen
To sit in state, and idly dream;
Too long have we been frozen

In indolence and usurped reign
Of heaven's delightful region;
Our honor bears a hateful stain,
So let our host be legion,

To bear upon the enemy,
Regain the crown of Satan,
Restore his ancient dynasty,
As I have oft relaten.

In armor will you find your king,
To lead you to the border;
With cannon shall his praise you sing
In bloody, thundering order.

Prepare to laugh and toast a while,
And dance, and shout, and prattle,
Your merry humor to beguile;
And then prepare for battle!"

A storm of cheers arose to greet
Armillus when he'd ended,
And through each eager-peopled street
The hubbub far extended.

From town to hamlet flew the news,
Across the land and water,
Its fervor elsewhere to infuse
Into each son and daughter

Of hell's domain, to understand
The aim that was at issue,
And to await their king's command
To lead them to the fissure

That enters here, that enters there
Into the regions nether,
And whither they would now repair
Beneath their flag together,

The sons to fight, the maids to heal
The wounds that would await them;
To wield the sword, to flash the steel;
To battle and berate them

Until the crown of heaven was won,
 Until their flag was planted
 On topmost tower in blazing sun,
 Until them peace was granted.—

And so Armillus came to wed
 His queen, herself her donor,
 And place upon his manly head
 Her crown, her love, her honor.

How yelled the crowd, how sang the court,
 How flowed the wine in fountains,
 How swelled in mad display the sport,
 How 'rose to rugged mountains

The flashing lamps, the dazzling lights,
 The bright illumination,
 How grew in dizziness the sights,
 The glee, the animation :

How pressed to heart his royal wife
 The new-made king, invoking
 The fates to spare her precious life
 To frosty age, and cloaking

In choicest epithet his glee ;
 How 'rose his breast with ardor ;
 How sparkled fine' and royally
 His crown ; how flew the harder

The jest, the sentiment about,
 How highly went the revel,
 How went in air the laughing shout
 From thousands : " Vive the devil ! "

How rolled their eyes in maddening maze,
 How red their cheeks were burning,
 How waxed th' exultant craze ;
 See how the dance is turning !

Armillus fled at last the scene
 Which beggars my description ;
 As king, he had there honored been ;
 As husband, no proscription

Would he another hour endure ;
 And Mepha was a woman,
 And thirsted for the blissful lure ;
 The devil is but human !

They bid the merry crew good-night,
 And so, too, we will bid them ;
 So let us screen them from our sight,
 And of our presence rid them.

And, meanwhile, yet arose the glee,
 And 'rose to exultation
 In maddest, merriest degree
 Of crazed intoxication.

They sang to woman, song and wine,
 They drank and loved and boasted,
 They felt that sentiment divine
 Which Christians never toasted.

They outdid madness in a way
 That swims my head to tell it.
 That wants the wildest fancy's sway
 With utterance to swell it.

They tasted what it meant to sieve
 Bright pleasures from distraction ;
 They knew then what it meant to live—
 What wot you of such action ?

Hear how they shout, list how they sing :
 " While wine and woman thrill us,
 All hail, all hail unto our king !
 All hail to thee, Armillus ! "

THE END OF THE INFERNAL HISTORY.



BOOK IV.

THE CONQUEST OF HEAVEN

CANTO I.

THE CALL TO ARMS.

THE sin and the shame and vice we see,
 Frivolity we espy,
However attractive and gay 't may be,
 However may laugh its eye,

Has yet to appear in colors bright
 To moral philosophy.
Be other than virtue's foe and blight,
 And bane of society.

How sweet in a maid that she is pure :
 A wretch who would see her fall ;
And justice, 'though slow, how good 'tis sure ;
 A fool who would end its thrall.

Who loves not to see the sky when blue,
 The meadows and woods when green,
The sun when it sets in golden hue,
 A sight when is bright the scene ?

'Tis good that the wrong some love, 's not right,
 And good that all right 's not wrong,
That virtue is fair unto the sight,
 And error is masked not long.

We love what is good to keep the peace :
 What's pure, for our family's weal ;
Nor order nor law shall ever cease
 While we unto these appeal.

A nation that lives in unity,
 Obedient to all its laws,
We laud for its fame and probity,
 And give it our best applause.

In short, we condemn whate'er 's not right,
 We turn from what 's wrong away ;
In darkness we seek and search for light,
 And revel in open day.

Yet must I oppose what fain you 'd draw
 As moral from what I've said ;
Another conclusion thence must thaw,
 And differently 't must be read.

A saying sounds good that seems us true,
 Yet fallacy may be there :
'Tis fallacy what I've just rhymed you ;
 I hasten to lay it bare.

If fallacy seems what I'll conclude,
 To differ you have a right ;
My sentiments may be different' viewed,
 Infallible 's not my sight.

A woman is pure, and fair to see,
 And men to her pur'ty bow ;
She claims on that strength society
 Should hold to her then as now.

But look on the woman, young and old :
 How aim they to spend their life ?
To not be a maiden nor a scold,
 But simply to be a wife.

Th' ambition we laud as quite correct,
 But see what it brings them to :
With anxious deliberation pecked
 When silent' they favor sue.

In order to be adjudged as pure,
 As modest, as learned in arts,
The judgment of virtue to secure,
 They play us some hateful parts,

The girls are bred stupid, dull, demure,
 Their spirit is bound and crushed,
The flashes of nature come out fewer,
 The laughter is gradual' hushed.

A woman is nothing that's not held
 As parcel and part of man ;
Her beauty of spirit harsh' they weld
 To serve them this rigid plan.

She looses her grace to be bound up
 A puppy, a doll to seem ;
She's turned from the fountains of the cup,
 And rudely 's dispelled her dream.

She dare not appear in all her light,
 Her fulsome entirety,
For fear that to some it seem to bright,
 And stepping o'er modesty.

The poor little thing is cooped and vexed,
 And bred in a silent life,
Her feeling 's congealed, her mind perplexed
 The blossom is plucked e'er rife.

Her lesson is trick to catch a man ;
 To this she must sacrifice
All else, to this end must work and plan
 Until it becomes a vice.

A woman that's brilliant is abused
As something that 's not quite straight;
She stands 'fore the world as sure' accused,
And looses beneath its weight.

But girls who are laced in wrong ideas
Of hideous propriety,
"Though secretly they may far from please,
And have not a spark of glee,

Who play on the piano, sing a song,
Can dance, and be silent, dull,
Are weary and languid all day long,
Their temper not seen, and dull,

Who prattle a tongue that's not their own,
Embroider a trifle, draw,
To virtues domestic slightly prone,
Whatever may be their flaw,—

Are those that are called the gems of youth,
The models and trumps of girls,
In face of full sense, delight and truth,
A creature of stays and curls.

But those who resplendent' shine and flash,
Reflecting their beauty, wit,
Displaying their vigor, girlish dash,
Who gaily through vision flit,

"Though they be endowed with wondrous love,
Be learned in whatever art,
Be true to the inner sterling core,
And swell with a splendid heart.

The verdict 's against them : they 're too free;
Come down with the dash, they say;
You seem not to have us probity;
Go fall on your knees, and pray.

And rather than woman be of wax,
I'd see her composed of sin;
And rather than see her spirit lax,
I'd see it to rot within.

I like not a harlot : wrong me not;
That thing is too foul for sight,
Too shocking a sore, too dark a blot,
Too sickening to see in light.

But hate do I well a dressed-up doll,
A victim of mothers' schemes,
Taught blabber as is a scarecrow poll—
Most hateful of all my themes.

And how does it come that one girl 's dull,
Another so bright and fair?
What system doth here the flowers cull,
And leaves them to blossom there?

Here comes in my point : what you deem pure,
Deprives the sweet girl of life;
The system that you denounce a lure,
Makes woman for what's my strife.

Is woman to live to shine in arts
To catch a rich husband but,

For sale in her own domestic marts,
Like birds in their cages shut?

Or is she to be what may by wit
And wisdom in life she gain?
What odds if she stumble now a bit?
It was not a wound :—a sprain.

Your girls' education : "Marry, dear!"
I say that the thing is wrong;
Much better we stood of altar clear :
So run on, infernal song!

But then there's the nationality
Which claims in these thoughts a voice;
A woman must bred in climates be
Of certain blue blood, the choice

Of these my conditions' scope to seem,
To be what is bold yet pure,
To rise with the wealth of captious dream,
And yet on her foot be sure.

An Anglican maid should dull appear,
With innocent, sheepish air,
Or else would she vulgar, coarse be mere,
Disgusting her ardent stare.

No grace can her crown when out of tune
With weak and insipid taste,
To leave her to languor, 's e'er a boon,
Or else she would fall, and waste.

But go where the blood and juice of grapes
Are mingled in harmony:
There will you spy humors, tacts and shapes
That rise with their jollity.

There Anglican eyes view foul the scene
Of female depravity,
And see in the air infernal spleen,
And fall with a prayer to knee.

There woman's herself, secure and free
From straight-laced, suspected ways,
Alive in her spirit, sense and glee;
In sunshine enwrapped, her days.

The *chic* that they bear, unknown to those
Who sour at the sight of *etc*,
Who blush at exposure gay of hose
By chance, and a sin it rate.

But think not that folly I applaud;
That burns like the mother in flame;
You must not construe my sense too broad
You shall not here blush for shame.

But there in the sunny lands of France,
The vine-clad precincts on Rhine,
Where jollity, fervor, fun and dance
On holidays topmost shine,

There woman is wit, is life and soul,
The essence of joy and glee,
A glory, a triumph, true, heart-whole,
As woman should always be.

And if it you seem that there they fall
Too readily, then you 're wrong;
The sight, it is true, will on you pall,
But rest not in error long.

For there, when she falls, a woman falls
Into a next lower sphere,
And comes out anew in festive halls,
Not less to some sinner dear.

All know she's no more what ought to be,
And view her as her becomes,
Depraved, and out cast from sanctity;
They know that she's in the slums.

But where the staid Anglo-Saxon lives,
A woman must be demure;
And if she not sours and weeps and grieves,
They take it she is not pure.

A woman who falls, falls low : to hell,
Where never they cast a look;
She's damned; and they damn her, oh, so well :
Her aspect they ne'er could brook,

Those virtuous dames who form the world
Of fashion as such it is,
In bigoted, narrow doctrines furled;
They never go off and fizz.

But look them not deep into the soul
For fear you might start at sight
Of what to your eye would there unroll;
You'd shudder to see that night.

The woman of cast where *thee* and *thou*
Replaces the *tu* and *du*,
Are worse than *grisettes* in France, I vow,
Who hide not their shame from view;

Thus, rotten are families to the core
In Brooklyn, New York *et al*,
The mother seducer, daughter more
Depraved than e'er think you shall.

In Liverpool, London it 's the same;
'Tis good that the sin is hid;
'Tis well it is buried deep, the shame,
Or all would there fly your mid.

The difference is plain: hypocrisy.
Is worse than the open deed,
Much worse if it is depravity,
Which claims in the dark more meed.

And what does this prove? What I have said:
That wrong may be often right,
That life crops out there where thought you 't dead,
And day where you saw but night.

You think that morality there pines
Where women like men are free,
Where cluster the grapes on aching vines,
And people laugh merrily?

Those lands have been wild in point of real'
Unblemished, white virtue, true,

But now it turns out unto their weal—
And where are, dear Saxon, you?

They 're turning to right, you stick to wrong,
You're rotten within; without
They seem, but do not, to hell to throng;
Your preaching is put to rout.

You claim to be e'er the champion of
What's virtue, what's right, what's true,
What's faith, what's devotion, what is love,
What's unctious, what's pure, what's blue;

You claim that the Teutons delve in sin,
The French are gone down in vice,
That you have alone e'er righteous been,
And fit for a paradise.

You pitiful fool, you're worse than all:
They sin, but they do not lie;
They leave all their virtue when they fall,
Nor Christians profess to die.

Your system is wrong; you say it 's right?
Then wrong, as I said, bears fruit
Delicious, and day breaks out of night,
Your pretence to slay, to hoot.

I say let's be honest; weak we are,
And much is our mortal sin;
At nightfall we drag it on too far,
So let it not hide within.

I hope that the day is near at hand
When vice and when sin's unknown,
Have ceased our escutcheons black to brand,
And out of the world are thrown.

And that can be done by giving up
The thralldom of priestly rule,
By ceasing on wafers yet to sup,
And routing the Christian school,

By throwing aside hypocrisy,
And being a trifle bold,
By setting the soul at liberty
Of ministers' crafty fold;

By living a life without as you
Would rather you lived within;
No white is so pure as mixed with blue,
No virtue as tinged with sin.

Confound your religion, woes and tears,
Live out as you feel at heart;
Aside with your prayers, your sighs, your fears,
And play us an honest hart.

The devil's a fellow you'll all like,
Come join me to cry him hail;
E'en Milton not cared him hard to strike;
I'll go for him freely bail.

I'm gilding not sin, nor stirring vice,
But sorting from wrong the right;
I've sought not your virtues to entice,
To put your good thoughts to flight.

I have not taught folly linked with shame,
My moral came out in end ;
Mine was not a desperate, roguish game ;
Here virtue and honor blend.

Then follow me on to hear my song
From canto to canto, and
Compose yourselves well to come along
Into a new, heavenly land.

Armillus is roused, and Mepha stout
In purpose her cause to gain,
To put the old foe to flight, to rout—
Long may they together reign !

Our hero resolved to send to her
Who ruled o'er the bright domains,
Their purpose in honor to aver
E'er entering upon those mains.

He went o'er the ground of Satan's fall,
And stated his testament,
Asserted the destiny of his call,
And showed her his will and bent.

He did not desire to spill the blood
Of those who sustained her crown,
Nor would with his minions heaven bold' flood :
But she must from throne come down.

He pledged her that she should fare as well.
As though she still reigned alone,
But heaven must bow to the rod of hell,
And Satan's dominion own.

Thus wrote the young king, sustained by her
Who shared his exalted height ;
Old Hugon, who ne'er was known to err,
Was sent off that self-same night

To travel in haste to yonder court,
Deliver the message there,
Its manner of taking to report,
And bear him their charge with care.

They waited six days by hellish count,
When Hugon did there return,
High' welcomed, the palace steps to mount ;
Now would they the answer learn.

He stepped 'fore the throne with vigor graced,
And bowed to his sovereign low ;
A murmur about th' assembled chased :
He spoke 'midst their faces' glow :

" I came to the court ; her majesty
Received me with some surprise :
She guessed not what mought my message be ;
She took it in stately wise,

And read with calm eyes your majesty's
Most gracious command ; methought
The blood in her purple veins would freeze,
So highly was she upwrought.

She prorogued her minlstry, let them see
Your majesty's hand and seal ;

And them, too, it touched as fearfully ;
I saw it their looks reveal.

I saw how the horror swelled their hearts,
I felt they'd fain strangle me,
And make me the aim of thousand darts
If such in their might could be.

I saw how the Christian troubled soul
Was harrowed e'en by th' idea
That hell, hated hell, should up, and roll
Upon their loved sanctity.

I noted the fear that seized their mind
When all that they held so dear
Should conquest at hand of Satan find ;
I saw them convulse with fear.

Yet saw I defiance line their brows
Still stark in the Christian faith,
Determined to hold unto their vows,
As likely their answer saith.

They parleyed in private two long days,
And left me to bide their time,
To notice their manners, learn their ways,
And study their sense and rhyme.

And then the queen came to have writ down
What she and the Parliament
Concluded to say for her renown,
And me on return forth sent.

Here am I, and this, sire, gave she me,
This parchment, to bring in haste ;
I know not its sense, your majesty ;
In seal hath she 't well encased."

And Hugon was still, and handed out
The message ; Armillus read,
And left them not long its mind to doubt ;
This was what the queen had said :

" Armillus, Rex. We've received your hand,
And having us thought what word
To say in reply, at your command,
Our purpose have firm' averred.

You misunderstand your royal place,
And issue in blasphemy
What seems not unto your august grace ;
Our answer in friendship be.

We live side by side on unknown sphere,
But neither in heaven nor in hell ;
Still worldly is all we may see here ;
On this strange empyreal shell.

We knew not on earth or other globe
This land that there is between
The there and thereafter, still to probe
Our nature on such a scene.

The God you deny still dwells on high ;
We hope yet to see His face,
And shall us in ways of life yet try
To win us His godly grace.

And Christ our Redeemer you would seek
As dead, and in tomb here set,
Will yet show your wisdom where 'tis weak,
Unto your condign regret.

The Spirit Most Holy 'll teach you fly
From what you imagine right;
You have yet in care to live and die
Before the eternal night.

We pray you will see your royal state
Is not what it claims to be;
It is of itself most high and great
Without you should set the plea

That we rule in heaven and you in hell;
That we are the child of Jove,
And you in the line of Satan dwell,
He father of her you love.

May Jesus enlight' your royal heart
To rob it its dread conceit,
And show you your humble, rightful part;
Repent, for the hours fast fleet.

But if you persist you're Satan's child,
And we wear the crown of God,
Your sin will in heaven's archives be filed,
And truly be hell your sod.

We fear not your threat to fight the claim
You issue in sinful boast;
God's with us, will give us victors' fame;
We stand by our word and post.

We're ready to teach by force of arms
How vain is your mad demand;
Already we hear our host's alarms
To fight for their faith and land.

Our banners will fly to war-charged breeze,
With cross on their colors wrought;
And if in our blood we wade to knees,
We stand by what was us taught.

Yea, verily, are you child of hell
To battle 'gainst Christian cross;
With prayers we'll win, and win so well
That you shall esteem your loss.

We crave not your night; there may you go
You back when we whip you here;
But ne'er must your face again you show
When vanquished, where suns shine clear

To show us the greatness, grace of God
Who led us to victory;
Ah, iron will prove for you His rod
In flaming eternity.

Come on with the legions 'neath your reign,
In God's name we you defy;
You bring them to be by thousands slain,
To hear their poor orphans' cry.

God's curse be on you for what you think,
And what you would now attempt;

In horror yet will from flames you shrink,
From mercy, from grace exempt.

We sully the seal that binds this hand,
But send it our faith to screen.
Such is our reply; and to command,
We sign it: Yours, Diva, Queen."

Armillus was struck, but none there knew
What struck him in this reply;
His features assumed an ashen hue;
Nor saw they the reason why,

For next did he smile, and give command
That all should prepare for war,
To win him her crown and hated land
Which hell-fire, defeat him swore.

It went through the realm like thunder blast,
The call to infernal arms;
In armor and valor all were cast;
They came in unnumbered swarms.

They hurried to place their wealth and life
In hand of their monarch's will,
Prepared to do earnest, bloody strife;
All hell was aroused, a thrill.

And when they'd assembled on the plain
From furthest and nearest strand,
Armillus him knew that not in vain
Had been his contemned demand.

He saw that the victory was theirs,
He saw the fanatic herd
Asunder, he heard the bugle-blares
That would her compel those words

So proudly she'd uttered, to eat; he saw
Her sceptre delivered o'er,
And noted the carnage made, in awe,
The corpses in blood and gore.

The order to march like eagle shriek
Resounded throughout the ranks;
And over the regions cold and bleak,
O'er rivers, along their banks,

Through gulches, o'er mountains, moved the train,
As though it would never end;
Well might the young king himself then wain
As Satan in power, to send

His legions 'gainst Jove, to try once more
The cause so repeated' lost
As told in Miltonic, classic lore,
Whatever might prove the cost.

How fondly he kissed his queen good-bye,
And caught her in rapt' embrace;
He saw the bright tears like dew in eye,
And rolling adown the face.

And then he was off like flying wind,
On horse of a royal breed;
If Diva was right, so much he'd sinned
Him never as now. His steed

Him carried well o'er the frozen snow
Till light came from heaven's domain,
When thoughtful' he turned, his heart aglow,
And sang into hell this strain:

"Thou beautiful, peaceful, queenly night
That lulls me soft' asleep,
That shroudest the naked truth from sight,
That closest the eyes that weep,

That bringest on joy in dreamy hue,
And rosiest, fondest bliss,
That hidest our follies, sins from view,
That sealest our peace with kiss;

That wakest at times to maddest heat
Our passions, emotions, thoughts;
And mak'st them now dread, and now so sweet,
With ghastly or fair consorts;

That servedst my heart on earth of yore,
That art my companion now;
It saddens my soul, my heart grows sore
To leave thee behind, I vow.

Farewell, fare thee well, fare long thee well,
But fare me not well fore'er;
I long to return to thee and hell,
Thy darkness with thee to share.

Sweet night, with thy tresses soft and black,
Preserve me thy kisses; 'though
I now must e'en turn awhile my back,
Await me from there below

My coming in haste, to woo fore'er
With ardent devot' thy love;
So mayest thou well at present fare:
I go me not far to rove.

Farewell, thou still night, farewell to thee
Until we shall meet again,
And pray that Armillus may not be
Found numbered among the slain."

—:0:—

CANTO II.

—
LIGHT.
—

YOU think that my rhyme 's a curious rhyme,
Atrocious e'en in its way,
Its sentiments writ in hapless time,
Its morals some lengths astray,

You think that the man I've pictured here,
And woman, too, I've described,
Are offals of healthy thought and cheer,
Their natures not well imbibed.

You think this eccentric, that is wrong,
Most wretchedly wrought my theme;

You think to descry throughout my song
A sordid, an idle dream.

You think me abnormal for my verse,
My characters rate you loose
Of natural feature, much too terse
My fancies, or too obtuse.

You read of a man who 's not like those
You see in your daily life,
A woman who is not all the prose
You seek for in child and wife.

You see men engaged in heinous deeds,
And women who shock your sight,
In manner that no compassion pleads,
On others and selves a blight.

You read of a rape or other crime,
And shudder as if you thought
In no conditions of place and time
You such dreadful thing had wrought.

You hear of the foll'ies of humankind
And think of them as if you
Could ne'er be so false, so weak, so blind,
Nor turn from the right and true.

You wonder at things you read each day
As if you were angel-bred;
You smile at the claims of fiction's sway
When lovers and maids are wed,

When villains intrigue and deftly plot,
As if it were all romance,
As if there exist' no human blot,
There was no such thing as chance.

And when you in papers read of sin,
Of horror, of crime, of death,
You marvel that in the heart within
There lives such a foetid breath.

Not strange nor so much perverse are you;
You're human; and so are they
Who write you in such a dreadful hue,
And chant an infernal lay.

Remember that man 's the tenement
Of all that's debased and false,
Of all that's on truth and honor bent,
Of all that at nothing halts.

I am not at all of other blood
Than you, for my wrathful song;
My fancies not flow in other flood
Than that which bears you along.

My hero is cast in human form;
I know of a man, his like;
The passion that sweeps him like a storm
Bears others upon its pike.

My heroine not differs from her sex
In many examples cast,
Nor see I wherefore she should perplex,
Nor why you should stand aghast.

The fiction that whets our appetite
For further fantastic plots,
Is less unlikely than what you sight
In palaces, pens and cots.

Each man lives a life he deems that he
Experiences here alone,
Each woman a strife to which thinks she
Herself but of all is prone.

These lives were as great, as nobly writ,
As dread and as black of tint,
If only the proper chance would flit
About them to rouse their dint.

Temptation to sin not comes to all.
And so some abound as pure
Who would, were they tempted, deep, deep fall;
You'll grant me that truth, I'm sure.

Napoleons there live in humble hearts
Who want but the chance to rise;
They sally along in graceless parts
Unnoticed by other eyes.

A man has the elements within
To make him a devil or God,
An acme of virtue or of sin
To feel or to wield the rod.

Men differ in that they're bred to be
Of other design, instilled
With early, parental ministry,
With varied perception filled.

Some feel that they own the master hand
For this or the other art;
Not all, it is true, take genius' stand,
But all have the thing at heart.

And all that men do and act and say
I deem not a whit perverse;
For me they may steal and kill and pray,
And live out a grace or curse:

I mean to assert that man can ne'er
Astonish me with his acts;
A man is but human; it is there
Behold I the germ of facts.

So call me not strange, my verse a snare,
My characters falsely drawn;
With them you the self-same foibles share,
And similar motives fawn.

In all this wide world all things are right
Because they exist, and Pope
Held never a thing so well in sight,
And was not a misanthrope.

Go seek to reform what's wrong, but know
That wrong is a trait of things,
And when you it deal its mortal blow
And rob it its poisoned stings,

You alter what e'er has been, and will
In spite of your efforts be;

It lies not within your human skill
To alter humanity.

If I should attempt to be as wild,
As mad as I ne'er have been,
The father of such a monstrous child
That flee would it you as sin,

If I should quadruple horrors passed,
And add to my railing still,
Should hold to yet fiercer doctrines fast,
Run riot with pest and ill,

Confound institutions, break your peace,
Play hell with your fondest ties,
Your wrath with my blasphemies increase,
Sift truth with the foulest lies,—

I still would you have but think my mind
As if it were all your own,
A rightful adjunct of humankind,
In normal condition shown.

I'll make not a stroke to rescue this
From censure and e'en abuse,
From animadversion, scorn and hiss;
I 'wait that the storm break loose.

But this will I say: a fool 's a fool,
The worse if he critic be;
He'll plaster and slash in various school,
In folly and vanity.

A critic's a man like all small men,
All-wise in his own conceit,
With fickle, perverse and forward pen,
To thunder, to frown, to beat.

I rest not my hopes on such as these
To rescue my name from out
Oblivion, but only seek to please
Those few whom remains no doubt

In questions of plain philosophy,
Who read me between the lines,
Who question me not the honesty
Of purpose that here out shines.

Methinks I can read this life aright;
I doubt if my view be wrong;
And what I have swept up with my sight
I give you again in song.

I have not the patience nor the gift
My subject to treat in full,
The chaff from its wheat to pick and sift,
The weeds from its bed to pull.

It is but a youth who pens this verse,
Unmannered in poet's art;
So if you at all these lines rehearse,
Take what I have said to heart.

Armillus will seem you less a knave
If he is but judged a man,
And Mepha not needs your grace to crave
If rightly the sex you scan.

Go see where he rides by Hugon's side,
And leaves his domains behind;
I would you had half his hellish pride,
And half of his steadfast mind.

To Hugon he spake: "The dawn's at hand,
I notice its shimmer there;
I wonder if in that heavenly land
My purpose will happily fare."

And Hugon replied: "As yonder cone
Of fulgence there stands on end,
So shall in the heavens Armillus' throne
Its glory the old transcend.

See how in the darkness stands the light
Out thrown from th' empyreal shell's
Fair bowels, a column proud to sight,
As if to announce our hell's

Staunch legions the triumph them awaits;
And note how the air grows mild
As now we approach these rocky straits
There yawning so deep, so wild.

But fear not, my sire, to climb them down
As if they were earthly refs;
Our builders have earned them much renown
By wonderful cars and hefts

On which to descend to that bright realm;
We'll on e'er the rest catch up;
It would not be fair to overwhelm
Queen Diva. Suppose we sup

In friendliest wise within her court
As heralds her sent to tell
That now she must strengthen every fort
To cope with the arms of hell?

Your majesty's unbeknown to her;
She'll surely not know what quest
She harbors in such a knightly sir;
You'll leave to my care the rest.

Besides, sir, you'll learn to know the queen
Whom destiny made your foe;
She's worth, I am told, to well be seen;
So look e'er you strike the blow."

Armillus him smiled: "Our wife at home
Would scold if she knew that we
On frivolous pleasure were to roam,
While silent and sad is she.

She's jealous, I fear, of Diva's face;
They tell me that beauty sits
Upon it, and regal, melting grace,
While goldenest sunshine flits

Around and within the tresses fair:
If rumor here speak the truth,
Then Mepha may well concern it bear,
For beauty love I, in sooth.

But love is a thing I ne'er could feel
For one who is thus endowed

With faith which I must and do repeal
As ne'er by myself avowed.

Yet will I this paragon observe,
And see if so fair she be;
To 'scape from the charms will I me nerve,
And think that my foe is she.

Come hither, thou page: thee backward hie,
And say that we go ahead;
And ere we command their arms to try,
No blood must in heaven be shed.

Let's haste, my old friend, now he is gone
To bear my behest to them
Who led my dark arms to conquest on;
Here have we now gained the hem

Of hell's wide domains. Hallo there, swain,
Await us to tread thy car;
This day we must be in heaven, I wain;
The way, as I hear, 's not far."

The briefest delay, and off were they
The rocky defile adown;
And nearer and nearer came the day,
And nigher the heavenly crown.

Here happened a wonder to the king:
The train thundered down the steep
With slackening speed, nor failed to bring
Concern and amazement deep.

The vertical horizontal seemed,
A level became the fall,
But when upon heaven's fair fields they beamed,
The sight there explained it all;

For once more they righted, turned about,
And then did Armillus learn
That gravity thrice had in their route
Been different, and changed at turn

Of hell to the chasm, chasm to heaven;
That gravity centred in
Th' empyreal shell, and had him given
Sensation he ne'er had seen.

They shot into light, the brimming light
That dwells in a summer zone;
Their hearts beat anew within the sight,
As used to the dark alone.

How different the scene, how mild the air,
How green were the woods around;
So bounteous a nature had he ne'er
Yet seen. What melodious sound,

The singing of birds; how deep' they thrilled
Armillus into the soul;
It softened his heart; he fain had willed
To turn from the bloody goal.

How shone through the green the sea so blue
As though it had ne'er seen gales;
How scudded the ships, and passed review,
How gleamed in the light the sails.

And now came a valley, peaceful, still,
Sweet' nestling among the mounts,
Traversed by a rippling, sparkling rill :
How gaily its course it flounts,

Here broken by rocks, there held by twigs,
Here eddied by unseen pools,
And carrying onward tiny rigs
Of verdure, or splashing schools

Of silvery fishes—then the scene
Was changed in a moment's flash ;
There came an extent of endless green,
And o'er it they rumbling dash.

Armillus looked up into the sky,
And wondered to see not one,
But thousands of orbs, to beautify
The country they over-run.

It was as he e'er had tutored been
While yet in his dark domain :
The shell was lit up by suns within
Which myriads of systems reign.

Some flashed with a face that blinded sight
Which caught but an instant's glance ;
And others, far off, gave lesser light,
Or sent but a ray by chance.

And as he yet looked, a village passed
Them by, in their headlong course ;
The look that upon Hugon cast
Struck t'other as strange, perforce.

He scowled when the steeple of a church
Unwillingly met his eye ;
And other concern his glances search
As madly they dashed it by.

Armillus him hardened in his heart,
And hated the land that bore
Within its society such a part ;
It scorched him unto the core :

"Out on you, vile fanatics, fools and knaves
That keep such a faith as this,
And carry it e'en beyond your graves,
When here in fair heaven you miss

The Trinity you adored on earth,
The glory you sighted here,
The bliss that awaited heavenly birth,
The welcoming angels cheer.

I paused for a while ere I would raise
My sword to attack your peace,
But now you have wounded thus my gaze,
I'll not for a moment cease,

When once I've begun, to do you harm,
To fell to the last your race ;
So may you come on, your legions arm :
Defy will I you to face,

And scatter your corpses o'er the plain
As though they were mown grass blades,

And blood shall the verdure 'round you stain
Till pestilence haunt these glades.

A day but I'll wait to tell your queen
Armillus has come to fight,
And leave her to sorrow o'er the scene
To which she'd no title, right

To reign. May she fair as sunlight be,
She shall not me move my will ;
My Mepha is far too dear to me ;
Of vengeance she 'll have her fill."

Alas for the words ; his heart beat high ;
It grieved for what here he'd said,
It gave to his cruel boast the lie ;
'Twas filled with an unknown dread.

CANTO III.

THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN.

METHINKS that I saw you smile, when I
Have read you of things sublime,
At words not alway in poet's eye
Nor introduced oft in rhyme,

At terms scientific, theories
Of modern demand, and thought
That with the didactic sole' agrees,
In sturdy expression wrought.

I ask you : is poetry the same
It was in the days of yore
When minstrels to mart it off there came
Their mistress or king before,

And sang about gallant knights, fair maids.
Of dragons' and monsters' keeps,
Of robbers engaged in bloody raids,
Of charges in gallant leaps ?

Of armor, of bow-strings, lances, shields,
Of helmets and trusty blades,
Of gory and fiery battle fields,
Of castles and rich arcades ?

Of woodcraft, of witches, goblins dread,
Of ballads and twanging lyres,
Of banners, of might, and nuptial bed,
Of valiant and faithful squires ?

Is that not a poem which not sings
Of such now enfossil'd themes ?
A paean not that which no more rings
With such long forgotten dreams ?

Must verses be 'strict' to love and war,
To flowers and knightly deeds,
To chivalry, clumsy ancient lore,
To sentiment, foolish creeds ?

Can poems not bear the themes of thoughts
Of modern conceit, design ;
Discuss the vain follies, ruinous torts
Of matters in social line,

Philosophy, science, history,
Cosmogony, life and law ;
Examine the natural mystery :
From such its conclusions draw ?

Were Pope but a bard had he but writ
His essay on man, were spent
To purposelessness his caustic wit,
His practical sentiment ?

Your answer I pass ; it suits my style
To bring you in rhythm and rhyme
My topic in modern rank and file,
To bow to the thought of time.

I write not of threadbare subjects here,
And follow will not your verse
In similar radiance, cast off gear,
To merit my public's curse.

Accustom yourselves to words I bring
In metre to speak my will,
And listen to terms in which I sing
As though they had hy-gone thrill.

Didactic I'll be at times, I know,
But that must not hurt the rest ;
I feel for my topic all the glow
Contained in the minstrel's zest.

Armillus may not a hero be
For whom you would pant and sigh,
But now is the sign of poesy
Quite aught than in days gone by.

You see him in heaven on purpose bent
Its glory to fell destroy,
The treachery ancient to resent,
To Mepha's eternal joy.

He went to the city where the queen
Held court with her saintly band ;
Incognito came he on the scene
To view him that sunlit land.

What Paris in hell was throne and crown,
Was London in heaven, he found ;
Appropriate even to renown,
The centre of priestly ground

In Protestant sense ; heaven had its Rome,
But Diva was queen for aught ;
Her gospel had proved the rod of home,
And so were her subjects taught.

Armillus soon learned that th' older church
Was loathe to then aid the new,
But could not well leave it in the lurch
'Gainst Satan's infernal crew,

So sent on its knights to aid the cause,
And then to dispute the crown

With Diva for making heavenly laws,
And trod the usurper down.

Armillus and Hugon 'rived at court
As messengers sent from hell
To bring her the sense of their retort
To what she had writ' so well.

When hardly announced, they were received
In presence of majesty ;
The answer, she said, her sorely grieved ;
To war she could not agree,

And yet she must stand in her defence,
And give them an eye for eye ;
So might they come on, and fight commence ;
She 'd triumph or she would die.

And as she thus spoke, Armillus turned
His looks from her own away ;
She saw not his cheeks how red they burned,
And brought to an end her say.

And Hugon bowed low to take the word
And carry it to his king,
To tell him what he had seen and heard,
In arms her his will to bring.

He sorrowed to think that one so young,
So wondrously bright and fair,
Should thus of her crown and throne be wrung,
And bitter defeat her hear.

For Diva looked not a thing to spite,
But rather to dearly love ;
He fain would him draw from out the fight,
Return to his hell above.

She was but a girl, but glorious girl,
With sunniest, softest hair ;
Of all of her sex the brightest pearl ;
How sad she should ill her fare.

The brow was as smooth as marble block,
The eye was so loving' brown
Nor looked not a glance that served to mock,
To go with a telling frown :

It looked like a fawn's, and struck the heart
With tenderest chivalry ;
It looked it could never prove the dart
Of him that enjoyed its glee.

The cheeks were a trifle fine and pale,
But raised her rare charm to height ;
Those lips Hugon seemed as though no tale
Could issue their bloom to blight.

The chin was as childish as could be,
And warded off thoughts of guile ;
The form was a gem of symmetry ;
You melted to see her smile.

Her voice was as silver from a bell,
As though it an angel owned ;
The heart in her bosom seemed to swell
As full as those sounds sweet' toned.

The soul that enwrapped that woman fair,
That spoke in her every grace,
Seemed more than a goddess' gift and share
Than held in a mortal's face.

Armillus was shaken like a reed ;
It looked as his heart would burst,
Nor seemed him her presence then a heed ;
Though look up, his eye not durst.

She wondered to see that manly form
Thus taken with unsuppressed
Emotion and fiercest passions' storm ;
Her mind not the cause yet guessed.

When Hugon turned 'round to leave the hall,
Armillus not stirred a limb ;
He saw on his friend the curtain fall,
And yet he not followed him, .

But turned on the queen a maddened face,
And caught her in blazing eye ;
And Diva fell back a startled pace,
And sounded a painful cry.

Emotion brought beauty on that cheek
And into those flashing orbs
No stylus can 'grave, no tongue can speak,
No Venus in grace absorbs.

She turned from the king of hell as though
She stood in the sight of pest,
Yet did she his office far from know,
And still did her looks invest

This man with the attributes of all
That seemed her of bad repute,
So did she in haste from him back fall,
Aversion her glances shoot.

"Methought," she addressed him with, "that you
Would seek an abode with those
Who deem themselves part of Satan's crew ;
I wonder not thus you chose.

You know that I hate your very sight—
Then why do you seek me out ?
Return to your wrong and shame and night,
Your sacrilege, sinful doubt."

Armillus recovered sense and speech :
"Your majesty, let me say
That you I believed without my reach,
And ne'er in my humble way.

I knew not that she I loved on earth,
In heaven here doth rule a queen——"
"Enough ; you mistake my crown and worth,
And miscomprehend the scene.

Our audience is over ; leave us, sir ;
Return to the land you chose ;
We cannot us more or less aver ;
So leave us to our repose."——

Armillus inclined his stately head,
Made gesture with graceful hand :

"Most willingly would I right be led,
And everything understand.

Dismiss me in anger not, I pray ;
Let what you once felt for me
Determine to say me now not nay,
And merciful to me be.

You left me to mourn for years your death,
Decided my future life,
And passed us away, resigned your breath
Before you became my wife.

Then wonder not that I now request
You tell me what you befell
When you 'd passed away to what seemed rest
On this our empyreal shell.

I ne'er saw a face when you had died
That blotted your memory ;
Your passing-off robbed me all my pride,
My joy and my vanity.

You followed me through my whole career,
Monopolized every thought,
And left me a future blank and bare ;
In vain for respite I've sought.

I know that your soul exceeds your heart,
But pity me in my strait,
And let us in wrath and spite not part,
Nor villain me wholly rate.

I see that I am your bitter foe
Where politics are concerned,
But let us awhile that fact not know,
And let me not thus be spurned.

The blows to be struck have yet to come ;
Till then let us have a truce ;
And let what our hate therewith be numb,
And put the few hours to use."

Queen Diva frowned heavily, bit her lip,
And shot him a graceless glance,
And colored with anger to the tip,
Her beauty yet to enhance.

Then spake she : "I have no word for you ;
What would you, I pray, with me ?
What have I that can be deemed your due ?
In nothing do we agree.

You think me a queen in heaven e'en set,
And think you are bound with hell ;
Then why should we quarrel here and fret ?
What would you that I should tell ?

You cannot me shake my simple creed,
And I can't redeem your sin ;
It were me sheer foll' with you to plead ;
Then why would you I begin ?

My heart, it is true, with yours was linked
While yet it on earth owned life ;
But soon was my love for you extinct ;
I'd never have been your wife.

And why? Ask yourself if I could share
 An infidel's house and bed,
 His name and his sin with him could bear?
 No, no; we had ne'er been wed.

You trampled on all that I adored,
 You sneered when I sang and prayed,
 Your ribaldry ever on me poured;
 What wonder our love did fade?

Why would you once more revive those days
 Of misery, cruel tears,
 Of discord and most unhappy frays;
 We knew but a dearth of cheers.

Good bye. I have said much more than I
 Intended when I began;
 Then leave me, for I must earnest' try
 My victory yet to plan."

Armillus still moved not: "I'm amazed
 To hear what you tell me now;
 Your sentiments have me almost dazed;
 I cannot thus leave, I vow.

Your majesty must take off her crown
 A moment, and speak with me
 As though a girl still. I brook your frown,
 But satisfied will I be.

You tell me that after all the love
 You've showered upon my own,
 Your thoughts went astray to things above
 To leave me at length alone?

Ah, vain, heartless girl, I guessed it not,
 But read I my folly now;
 Unhappy has been my earthly lot;
 To much did I bend and bow.

Is love, then, a thing to be cast off
 Because we could not agree
 On faith? And seemed all my words you scoff?
 I would I had e'er been free

From such a false love; from each bright curl
 I read out a curse at last;
 I thought to have won me such a pearl:
 And now I must stand aghast."

The queen knit her brows.—"Go on," said she,
 "Now you have so well begun,
 And let me attend this homily;
 That space have you fairly won."

Armillus not flinched.—"'Tis well: I speak;
 I cannot have much to say;
 Your manner has left me stunned and weak;
 Yet dear' will for this you pay.

I was yet a boy, my heart as free
 As bird in the greenwood shade;
 We met, and I saw my destiny,
 My lot at your mercy laid.

Quite other were you in those bright days:
 A guileless, an artless girl;

You won me with all your simple ways,
 A love-sick, a verdant churl.

I gave you my heart the moment I
 But saw you, and left distressed
 My duties, my home; I had no eye
 For aught but for you, no rest.

I hovered about you day and night,
 And saw I was not all wrong;
 I feasted my soul upon your sight,
 I praised you in burning song.

Remember the stormy night we sat
 Alone in your island home;
 'Twas there that my love return begat,
 And higher my hopes bright clomb.

That night you asked not if God or Christ
 Us ever might come between,
 For Cupid had both of us enticed,
 And everything seemed serene.

We romped by the hour to feel the thrill
 A touch would produce, and sought
 By various sharp means and clever skill
 To be into contact brought.

Much reason was there against our love,
 And much was 'fore me adduced;
 But demons below, nor elf above
 Me could have from you seduced.

I bore them all down with might and main,
 My fervor too great to break;
 I bowed to no threats and no disdain;
 But stood it for your dear sake.

I won you e'er reason bid you halt:
 You threw in my arms yourself:
 The sugar was mixed with too much salt,
 The jewel with too much pelf.

You loved me in folly, and when sense
 O'er-mastered your feeble heart,
 In vain might I stand in my defence:
 You coldly me bid depart.

Nine months you endured the absent swain,
 And then you but thought to fail,
 And drew to your side me on again,
 And bid me once more you hail.

And then,—what a broil was not our life,
 Distract' with the wildest woe;
 You promised yourself to be my wife,
 And turned out my bitter foe.

You followed your dreams and whims to end,
 And I might stand by in pain,
 My trouble you deemed not to befriend;
 You met it with cold disdain.

You granted me promise once to be
 In future your better half,
 And left me unto my misery
 To spend on all else your laugh.

You sneered at my utterance, met with scorn
 My wishes and humble pleas;
 I often me wished I'd ne'er been born;
 What horrors on me did seize!

You quoted against what you'd find
 To wound me in deepest soul;
 To all my solicitude proved you blind;
 You left me in grief to roll.

At last I could stand no more the strain,
 And broke from the heartless tie;
 And broke in my flight my heart in twain,
 And saw through the hideous lie.

You suffered and fretted much, I know,
 But I was dismissed of fault
 By all who there knew my endless woe;
 But I knew me not to halt:

I worried until my joy was fled;
 And vanished, my boyish glee;
 My heart to fair woman ever dead;
 I rushed into revel me.

At last you succumbed to sombre life,
 And I wept till tears were gall,
 For shameful exploit and error rife;
 I answered to folly's call.

You left me to curse my later days,
 And cursed have I them so well
 That sin grew upon me dreadful craze;
 I gloated to end in hell.

I see in your look vindictive joy
 To have me thus ruin wrought,
 And make a detested wretch the boy
 Who ever your pleasure sought.

I see on your brow the mind within
 Full choked with its poisoned dart,
 More hateful than e'en the gauntest sin,
 A beauty without a heart.

You call that a Christian soul when hate
 Runs riot therein with rot?
 I now see the truth, alas, too late;
 Oh, awful then was my lot.

But let me forget the grief you brought
 Upon my poor, broken frame;
 Enough have we two dissension wrought;
 Die out in the air, wild flame!

My interest in you can never fade,
 And e'en as I here rehearse
 The wrong you did me while yet maid;
 I cannot your acts now curse.

'Tis over, my passion; but still were you.
 The one that I loved on earth;
 In honor no more did there I woo,
 And not till my hellish birth.

Then frown; still I ask to hear how came
 My love to be here the queen;

I buried in hell the by-gone shame;
 In honor may I be seen.

Forget we once loved and hated thus,
 And tell me your wondrous tale;
 Then will I depart; and ne'er shall us
 A meeting again detail.

We are on the eve of war and strife,
 And enemies must we be;
 We never again will meet in life;
 Then tell me your history."

And just as the word he last had spoke
 Died out on the summer air,
 In haste on the twain a warrior broke.
 With head of his helmet bare.

"Forgive, gracious liege, that I intrude,"
 He gasped as he sank on knee,
 With breathless alarm and haste imbued;
 "Speak!" ordered her majesty.

"The foe has arrived on Tartar plains
 In numbers we failed to count,
 And ever and e'er in forces gains,
 And stretching from mount to mount.

He does not advance, but stays in camp;
 Our armies are on the move;
 Their spirits, howe'er, are lax and damp;
 'I doubt we shall valiant prove."

The queen shot a glance of fretful rage
 Upon the unfortunate;
 With such as Armillus in the stage,
 She heard with a sullen hate

The tale of dismay; the hell-king smiled;
 A thunder cloud waxed her brow,
 With tempest and passion on it piled,
 That caused even him to cower.

"'Tis well," she replied unto the knight.
 "Go forth and let strife be done,
 And God will be with the cause that's right;
 Already I feel we've won."

The herald arose and looked about,
 And when he Armillus spied,
 He could not refrain a start and shout;
 "What is it?" Queen Diva cried.

"I cannot be wrong; I know him well,"
 Exclaimed the astonished man,
 "My liege, you behold the king of hell!"
 And tumult and hue began.

The queen grew as pale as snow, and cried:
 "Arrest him! Secure his sword!"
 A rush, and the king was seized and tied;
 "We have him, th' infernal lord!"—

"Then let him be led to dungeon deep,
 And burdened with heavy chains;
 Now may the reward deserved he reap,
 And see who will cure his pains.

He stole like a thief at night to see
 What strength to oppose was here
 Before he attacked; a spy is he.
 And now we have naught to fear.

The armies without their ruling mind
 We'll put in dismay to flight
 When they in a corpse their monarch find;
 So God helps the cause of right.

He puts in our grasp the enemy
 Who is at same time His own;
 His instruments in this work are we;
 This man must for all atone.

Then lead him away, and hold him safe;
 Ourself will we him attend;
 In vain shall he plead sigh and chafe;
 He shall not our will unbend.

His armies shall scattered be like dust,
 His widow shall weep aloud,
 His orphans shall learn to welcome crust,
 Himself shall be wrapped in shroud.

This blasphemy shall be punished well;
 Armilus, your mission's o'er;
 In truth shall you taste of fire and hell,
 And mercy of heaven implore."

Our hero flashed back defiant glance,
 And followed his jailers out,
 Nor feared that this luckless circumstance
 Would give o'er his might to rout.

They placed him within a dungeon cell,
 And threw him a loaf of bread;
 The captive bore out misfortune well;
 "Laugh on, I am not yet dead!"

CANTO IV.

A DIVINE FIEND.

AND now you shall hear how beauty's mask
 May cover a rotten mind,
 What labors it takes itself to task,
 Atrocities seeks to find.

I show you a woman as she lived
 On earth in my own regard,
 How deeply my every sense she grieved,
 My sympathies foully marred;

And I will adduce from rigid fact
 The damnable fruits that grow
 On breeding with Christian error racked,
 What horrors and sins thence flow.

There lived a fair maid, of girlish mien,
 With innocent, childish glee

In infancy; now observe the spleen
 That comes with maturity.

The heart is a void, the mind a haze,
 The soul is a hateful thing;
 The mind is a knot, all thought a craze,
 Their issue a dreadful fling.

The crimes that some parents thus commit
 In maddening the crumbling brain
 With mockery for no heathen fit,
 And driving the mind insane,

I ne'er can forgive them; I have reaped
 The harvest that they have sown,
 And with it you'll find this canto steeped,
 Its gloom and distress you shown.—

In foulest and deepest dungeon cell,
 Unpierced by a ray of light,
 Lay chained to the wall the king of hell,
 A piteous, disheartening sight.

His eyelids were closed, but not in sleep;
 The mind was but too awake;
 The heart was a wreck, it throbbed so weak
 It seemed him as though 'twould break.

What ending was here to his campaign:
 A prisoner to the foe
 Himself, and his followers mayhap slain—
 Oh bitter, oh burning woe!

His armies, encamped in foreign laud,
 Would wait for the word in vain
 That was to the onslaught to command;
 His absence who could explain?

Had he not commanded they should not
 Shed blood till he gave the word?
 How could from the depths of such a spot
 His word of command be heard?

He saw them demoralized, foot and horse,
 His generals at counsel's end,
 At variance to pursue a course,—
 Where now was a succoring friend?

He saw the young queen sweep o'er the plain
 And take them in sheer surprise,
 To last gallant knight despoiled and slain,—
 Where now were his fondest ties?

He pictured a widow stunned with grief,
 The country distract' and poor,
 At mercy of every heavenly thief
 Of Diva's protection sure.

Could Mepha avenge his own defeat?
 Alas, she would crippled be;
 The carnage that went with the retreat
 At hand, would her death-knell be.

His boy but just born he saw exposed
 To strangers' slow mercy, waifed,
 His royal career forever closed—
 How tortured his heart-strings chafed!

But still there was hope, for Hugon 'd know
That he was a captive held
In forcible bonds by this their foe—
His heart with the new thought swelled.

So was the mind torn with this and that
To feel and to hope and fear,
The rising despair to hard combat,
His doubts to dispel and clear.

And hours thus passed on, and wearily watched
The prisoner for relief;
On empty, dark tablets periods notched
That marked him his joy or grief.

The hours sped to days, the days to weeks,
And still there was not a sign;
Had Diva then tired of further freaks?
How long would he have to pine?

Had battle been done? The victor, who?
Was Diva now queen of hell?
What agony sped his vigils through,
His misery who shall tell?

His figure grew waste, his spirit nigh
'Neath all this distraction broke,
And still the bleak days went slowly by,
Nor came there a voice that spoke

A cheerful accost; the uniform
That once was so grand and fine,
Too ragged to further keep him warm,
Was tearing in every line;

And chilly the dampness crept apace
On feeling, on heart and brain,
And deepened the shades on thinning face;
Dread horrors came in its train.

The crust that was flung to serve his meal
Was mockery, for he starved;
He noted the faintness o'er him steal,
With lowering phantasms larved.

The water he drank was stale, nor quenched
A spark of his burning thirst;
He drank it; and drinking, hand he clenched,
And Diva's unfeeling cursed.

He sank as the night sinks on the wood
There down on his native earth,
He altered in temper, changed in mood,
And wished he had ne'er known birth.

The hate that arose 'gainst humankind
Within that envenomed heart
Could parallel in no bosom find,
So cutting had grown its smart;

The malice he bore 'gainst Christendom
Would frighten the queen to see,
His better dictates had waxed so numb,
So narrowed his charity.

And by went the weeks, and yet no word,
To tell him he still was king,

Was through those confines of darkness heard,
His tortures relief to bring;

Until, of an hour, the jailer's key
Was thrust in the dungeon's lock,
The bolts were slid back, and horribly
They grated, and jarred the rock.

And open the iron door went wide;
He saw—not the man austere
Who there in that gloom vocation plied,
But her he had held so dear,

Queen Diva herself, with lantern dim
That flashed a dull ray about
And lit up a space to show the grim
Seclusion. There was no doubt

But that she had come in triumph there;
Her eyes blazed with poisoned light—
Armillus' heart sank, he could not dare
To hope that it all was right

Without with his troops: she could yet smile,
And smiled not in mad despair
As if her defeat thus to beguile;
Now must he damnation bear.

She set the lamp down, and shot a fierce
And cruel, quick look at him,
His mind with its poignant shaft to pierce,
In bitter, vindictive whim.

"So this is Armillus, king of hell,"
She laughed with a harsh refrain,
"You look your so sorry office well;
You'll ne'er look yourself again.

But I did not come to you in jest."
And as she pronounced these words,
Her brow was lit up with dreadful zest:
His blood seemed to lump in curds.

She looked such a fury, yet so fair
As goddess of wrath were she,
So royally did her glances flare,
As armed 'gainst a sinner's plea.

"List' well, fallen king, to what I say,"
Began the young queen, "for you
Will never again see light of day,
So be to your manhood true.

I'll put it to test, for 'though the love
I once in my younger days
Was able to give, was yours, a dove
Not always to love true stays,

And learns to despise what once was dear;
So I, too, now bear you hate:
And bleed shall you now for every tear
You caused me in girlish state.

You came with eccentric thoughts and ways,
And won me against my will,
'Though struggling against the ardent lays
You penned me my heart to thrill.

I came to my sense betimes, and spurned
 The love that I felt was false ;
 And 'though you with thoughtful passion burned,
 You now, in these gloomy vaults,

Must see that no spark of love was left
 When you from my side did stray,
 That I am of pity's sense bereft,
 Have ceased to be young and gay.

You ask what has changed my heart to this?
 I bid you observe your own,
 Where feelings of prayer have gone amiss,
 Religion has turned to stone.

As you hate Christianity, I hate
 Your heresy, and I mean
 To punish you in your direful strait,
 And vent on yourself the spleen

I bear toward those who sneer at prayer,
 At faith, and devout intent ;
 That vow have I made, and you shall ne'er
 To keep it me find relent.

The hatred you feel for me and mine
 Has led you to storm my crown,
 To rob me the prestige of my line,
 And hound me to ruin down.

A merciful providence has willed
 Your plan should not come to pass,
 Your mission should never be fulfilled ;
 Your soldiers in vain here mass.

You know what I feel, can realize
 What actuates me this hour
 To torture you in this cruel wise,
 What goads me to use my power.

I feel as 'though I could cause you pain
 As mortal on earth ne'er bore.
 Until you dismembered, racked, insane,
 Were rotting unto the core.

This will I perform, my victim you
 To die here a martyr death
 To heresy, ever lost to view,
 Passed off in an anguished breath.

You start as if these were unreal, strange,
 As if I were not the same,
 And yet I did since then not much change
 In sentiment nor in frame.

You cannot forget the maid you won,
 You pressed to your boyish breast
 Beneath the mild rays of summer sun,
 With hatred and strife at rest.

'Tis true I am now a mighty queen,
 But I am that Diva still
 Who struck on your heart no more than seen,
 Now strong with intent to kill.

I died when still young on earth below,
 In sorrow and stinging pain,

And thought me in heaven with all its glow
 When here I awoke again.

The king had but died without an heir
 Or relative to assume
 The crown ; there arose no little care
 To place it on some one whom

The gift might well honor ; there was none
 Who seemed for the sceptre fit,
 Who Parliament's approbation won ;
 It passed the legation's wit.

So finally did they all agree
 That they would the crown bestow
 On her who should maiden fairest be,
 And Christendom's precepts know.

And me did they choose, without a voice
 To say there was one more fair,
 Nor did they repent them of the choice,
 Or factions a grudge me bear.

My heart was my own since free from you,
 And here am I well beloved ;
 The honor not long appeared me new,
 And wanting have I not proved.

My armies are eager for the fray,
 And wait but for my command
 To make all your force a ready prey,
 And drive it from out the land.

And now that I've spoken thus at length,
 Have answered what you have asked,
 Collect what remains of all your strength ;
 Too long have in ease you basked.

Arise, while your jailer breaks your chains,
 And follow us where we go ;
 We'll see how you bear your ills and pains,
 Your tortures and fright and woe."

And while she yet spoke, his chains fell off,
 And brutally was he bid
 To rise, 'midst his jailer's sneers and scoff
 Who him of his fetters rid.

The queen left the cell, her lips hard pressed,
 Her eye with a fiendish look
 Aglow, and her brow aflash with zest
 Of hatred sight could not brook.

Armillus arose in pain, so weak
 He staggered against the wall,
 With fever so parched he could not speak,
 'Scarce strong to prevent a fall.

And coldly she looked upon his pain,
 And bade him be quick and spy—
 "A sorry Armillus you, I wain!"
 She sneered ; "Come, the hours go by."

He dragged his frail frame through corridor
 Aslime with cold damp and rot,
 With vermin ascamper on the floor,
 A drear and a frightful spot.

And finally stood they in a hall
 With import of dreadest kind;
 How welcome now seemed the chain and ball
 'Gainst what his eyes here did find.

From ceiling there hung a lantern which
 Threw 'round a dim radiance there.
 How gloomy and dark appeared each nich,
 How heavy, how chill the air.

A chamber of torture 's what he saw,
 With instruments standing 'round
 That filled him with horror and with awe,
 And caused his weak heart to bound.

Full masked, were assembled those who were
 To do their young queen's foul will,
 To cast on hell's king this shameless slur.
 "Keep still, my poor heart, keep still!"

He whispered, while Diva assumed a seat.
 He stood 'gainst a pillar leaned,
 Scarce able to stand upon his feet,
 Addressed by that beauteous fiend:

"You see what awaits you in this night,
 And fear that you want the strength
 To hear what I threaten you of fright
 And torturous pain, at length.

I'll spare you it all if you will swear
 On knee, and the Bible kissed,
 To leave off your heresy fore'er,
 And unbelief to resist,

If you will renounce philosophy,
 And Christian hereafter be,
 Then will I relieve your misery,
 And let you go off scot-free.

What say you?"—"I say that I defy
 Your threats; you may do your worst;
 Ere I be a Christian, will I die,
 And hold you fore'er accursed."

"I thought you would answer thus, proud king,
 But think not my threats are vain;
 I have me no fear but that I'll bring
 You 'round to repeat my strain."

"I swear you will not, by all that's dear!"—
 "Swear not; 'twill be perjury;
 You might want to break your word when fear
 Will visit your misery.

Be obstinate; we shall see ere long
 If you can bear out your woe;
 Your spirit, how brave, how staunch, how strong
 'Neath every new anguished throe.

Lay hold, and him bind unto the rack,
 Secure him as well 's you can,
 And stretch his vile frame till 's sinews crack;
 We'll see what he bears, the man."

And even as bid, they stretched and tore,
 But he was as mute as though

All iron unto the deepest core,
 Yet horrible was his woe.

She watched by his face till blue it waxed,
 And reason had fled its seat,
 Each fibre was strung and overtaxed,
 And heart had nigh ceased to beat.

And yet he was true to soul and sense;
 They racked the poor wretch in vain;
 He set up no plea, no frail defence;
 He bore out the awful strain.

And finally they released his frame,
 And gave him a cooling draft;
 Still Diva appeared to own no shame;
 She 'd try him till he was daft.

And so they secured and screwed his thumb
 Until it out spirted blood,
 Until it was dead, distort' and numb,
 Despoiled of its vital flood.

And still he refused th' inhuman queen
 Her mad and unheard request;
 And still it went on, the frightful scene,
 With crueller, fiercer zest.

They tortured as it was ne'er conceived
 In Spain's most disgraceful days,
 Nor could it have ever been believed
 That woman could go such ways

Though she be the worst of all her sex,
 Been wronged to the last degree;
 Such matters might well the sage perplex
 Who broods o'er sociology.

I will not delay what suffered here
 Armillus of this fair fiend;
 Enough that she drew him scarce' a tear,
 So well had his pain be screened.

He answered her nay until his tongue
 Hung out and refused to speak,
 His body him scorched, his skin sore' stung;
 And rendered a craze, her pique.

Exhausted in means to pain him more,
 They rested from further tasks,
 And back to his dungeon cell him bore,
 Foul' cursing beneath their masks.

And there the poor wretch was chained anew,
 And left to bemourn his fate,
 While Diva set out fresh plans to brew
 To heighten her victim's strait.

What horror had not his life e'er been
 From birth to his fearful death!
 In youth, he'd atoned for love and sin,
 And now he was racked for faith.

He hardly had strength to grasp his crust,
 To moisten his feverish lip,
 For yet he not felt that sink he must,
 That death had outstretched its grip

Once more to retard his mad career ;
 In spite of the pangs he bore,
 He thought he could yet not pass from here
 Unto a still other shore.

For where 'd be the mission he 'd been told
 That he would fulfill e'er long :
 If death was now nigh ? He 'd make so bold
 To think the advent was wrong.

Armillus he felt himself at soul,
 Armillus would meet success ;
 This was not the end, the final goal,
 'Though dire might be th' distress.

And as he there lay and suffered on,
 And hoped, it well seemed, in vain,
 With features that grew each day more wan,
 And limbs that increased in pain,

He heard in the night a cautious voice
 Through keyhole impressive' sound,
 That made his fast-sinking heart rejoice :
 Aha ! The escape was found !

But no, for the voice was heard to say :
 " Your majesty, it is I,
 Old Hugon, who found to you his way ;
 To see you I had to try.

So have I sought friendship with the man
 Who sends you your daily food
 And keeps you beneath the girl-queen's ban ;
 He proved me a tithe too good.

He would not allow me to approach,
 But now I have left him drunk' ;
 So hither I sped my cause to broach
 Ere out my reach you 'd sunk.

I could not obtain the keys, for he
 Delivered them to the queen ;
 She watches you, sire, too carefully
 That I could her come between.

This hour must I leave, e'er they suspect
 That we have exchanged a word,
 And into our camp my course direct
 Before I am seen and heard.

I knew they had recognized our king,
 And made him a captive here ;
 The news of your death they think I'll bring,
 But now they will have no fear

When I shall announce that you're alive ;
 Full energy will they 'rouse
 Themselves for your freedom soon to strive,
 And aid you to keep your vows

To raze from her stolen throne this girl,
 And humble her in the dust ;
 Our banners shall in the breeze unfurl
 To save you from cell and crust.

Queen Mepha has come to take command
 And act in your time and place ;

She masters the reins with gallant hand
 And shows a determined face.

So rest you in hope, my gracious sire ;
 Soon will you be out and free ;
 This palace will crumble 'neath the fire
 Of cannons and musketry.

And speak but a word that all is well,
 And that there is no mistake ;
 The victory rests with those of hell ;
 That hope can me no man shake."

Armillus drank in each precious sound,
 And fiery his heart did burn,
 And with a new life in valor bound ;
 These words did he him return :

" Away, my old friend, and speed in haste ;
 Tell Mepha she must not grieve,
 But gather her strength for war and waste ;
 And tell her I love and live.

And bid her be quick, for dreadful pain
 Must I in this dungeon bear ;
 Then say that if me she 'd see again,
 The fight she at once must dare !"

And Hugon replied : "'Tis well, I fly ;
 Adieu till we meet when hell
 Shall triumph as hither we us hie
 To open your dungeon cell !"

And then he was off, and silence reigned
 Once more in those regions dark ;
 His terrible wounds him fiercer pained,
 The gloom seemed him twice as stark.

When hark, there came footsteps o'er the stone,
 But lightly, as if a child
 Was tripping along them, and alone ;
 What meant it ? Was not reviled

Armillus enough ? For 'twas the queen
 Who came to survey the man
 She 'd offered so frightful, dread a scene,
 Her hatred so fierce' to fan.

She opened the door, and streamed the light
 Of lantern upon his face :
 A pitiful, granite-softening sight ;
 Yet loosened not Diva's grace.

" I come to inquire," she said, " if you
 Are still of the olden mind,
 If you have not changed a tithe your view,
 Conviction you could not find."

Armillus burst out : " I am the same,
 And fear me not now to die ;
 What needs it I live with such a frame ?
 For succor what care have I ?"

With devilish mien she him replied :
 " Your suffering can yet be worse ;
 I have but the least persuasion tried,
 And am to extremes averse.

But tempt me too far, and you shall feel
That monstrous can be my rage,
And deal you some wounds that ne'er can heal,
No remedy can assuage."

And he: "I'm content to see how far
Your torture I can me bear;
So may you my flesh and features mar,
Your doctrines I will not share."

And she: "It is well, and I will show
You how I'll avenge the speech,
That none shall ere say they knew your woe,
My boast to defy, impeach."

She turned on her heel, and slammed the door
That even the rocks 'round shook;
He sank on the pitiless stone floor,
By mercy and grace forsook.

And how did the queen fulfill the threat,
How words with their acts invest?
She caused in his dungeon to be set
A being alive with pest,

A leper whose breath was death to breathe,
Whose contact was foul disease,
Whose tumors with putrid flow did seethe
And horror none might appease.

In stinking and putrid atmosphere
Armillus th' infliction bore,
With poison infested every tear,
And tainted unto the core.

And still he defied the queen, and said
He never would budge nor shrink,
But answer the same till he was dead,
And tottered upon the brink.

Nor did she desist in that foul work,
But tortures for him devised
With water and fire, with rope and dirk,
In terror and craft disguised:

Until the poor wretch had lost the sense
To suffer another pang,
Nor could by a gesture make defence
On which an appeal to hang.

So finally Diva bid him starve,
And die like a dog, that he
Who would in the heavens his fortune carve,
Should finish in misery,

To those an example dread who might
Feel tempted to war 'gainst Christ;
In thought or in act His fall indite;
That honor should come high-priced!

And so it died out, the golden spark
That fired th' infernal realm;
He ended in shame, in pain and dark,
To nevermore overwhelm

These heavens with his forces—what a pass
To had our Armillus come!

The prophecy, where was that? Alas,
That voice was at present dumb.

He lay on the mouldy straw, a wreck,
With poisoned and cancered frame,
No soothing to mind his anguished beck;
'Twas played, the infernal game.

He breathed, 'tis true, but oh, so low
That life seemed a glimmer but
That at the least warning out would go,
His page be forever shut.

And yet it endured, that spark of life,
Through hours and through days of pain,
Of horrible fits, of dreadful strife,
Of ravings and cries insane.

He uttered: "Armillus must not die,
His mission is not yet done,
This heaven must in war yet conquer I;
The cause must be fought and won!"

Alas for the boast: it was the last
He made on empyreal shell;
His glorious command and might were past.
Armillus, farewell! Farewell!

—:0:—

CANTO V.

THE INFERNAL VICTORY.

ALL heaven was in arms, 'neath banners ranged
All nations to war 'gainst hell;
And brothers met there long years estranged,
To join in the wild pell-mell.

All trade was at end, profession closed,
All answered the royal call,
And faith in their arms and strength reposed:
The devil must yield, must fall!

Here came the staunch Prussians, helmet topped,
A small but a sturdy band,
There came the brave Gauls in line well dropped
To succor their mother land.

The Britons came flocked in gallant file,
The Spaniards in sombre hue,
Italians in gay Berzerker style,
The Norsemen in stalwart view.

There came the wild Turk with cymbal sound,
The Russians in fur out-decked,
The Arabs with desert chargers' bound,
The Indians with head erect.

There came who could carry musket, there
Came all who could trudge along
And join in the nation's cry and air,
And join in the common song.

They came from all lands, all climes and zones,
 With cannons and baggage carts
 Aclattering over the roads and stones,
 With fiery and valiant hearts.

A motley array to meet and fight,
 Ten thousands to rout, destroy,
 A powerful force to put to flight
 To dampen the hellers' joy.

Queen Diva reviewed the monstrous throng,
 And called the assemblage well:
 This army so great, so fierce, so strong,
 To sweep off the sons of hell.

Each city was fortified to last,
 Provided with shell and food,
 With garrisons from the bravest cast
 To hold them unto the blood.

On seas floated ships of all degree:
 Fast cruisers, torpedo boats,
 Great iron-clads, men-o'-war, to see
 No men in infernal coats

Steal marches with oars; all was prepared.
 The enemy, where was he?
 Still there where he first his tents had aired;
 He fought not, nor did he flee.

Then was it commanded charge be made
 To see what the foe would do,
 But gallantly were the shots repaid,
 And valiantly did he hew.

The heaveners retreated, but no foe
 Came after to cut them down;
 He backed to his tents without ado,
 With silence and sulky frown.

How looked it within the hellers' camp?
 Alas, it looked none too well:
 Their energy flagged, their spirits damp,
 A wrapped in some unknown spell.

Their king was away, and none knew where
 He 'd gone; and Queen Mepha cried;
 Alarm was fast brewing in the air,
 And spreading out far and wide.

What meant this inaction? Discontent
 Grew higher from day to day;
 Their journey began they to repent;
 Still nothing the storm to 'lay.

When suddenly life seemed new' infused
 Into the disheartened ranks,
 And soldiers no more the queen abused,
 Nor played their unseemly pranks.

Old Hugon arrived in deep disguise
 With message unto the queen;
 His coming each heart was there to prize;
 Quite different now waxed the scene.

The king had been seen, so ran the tale,
 And suffered most grievous harms

A captive in Diva's hand and pale;
 And everyone cried: "To arms!

To arms! To the rescue! Save our king!"
 High sounded the loud alarms:
 "To horse! To the guns! To everything!
 To victory! War! To arms!"

The tents were soon struck; in rank and file
 Marched column on column on
 In endless array; by rod and mile,
 Came pioneer, zouave, uhlan,

Came cuirassier, footman, cavalry,
 Came janizar, came dragoon,
 Came elephants, camels, infantry,
 In company and platoon.

Then hark to the fife that cheerily
 Pipes piercing a rousing air,
 The drum as it rattles merrily,
 The bugle in brazen blare;

The burst of the instruments of brass,
 The pibroch's quaint melody;
 In stirring conclave they onward pass
 To death or to victory.

Then left, and then left, then left, left, left,
 Huzza, and huzza, huzza;
 Still left, and still left, still left, left, left,
 Hurrah, and hurrah, hurrah!

And noisily clatter hoofs of horse
 On rubble, on stick and stone,
 On hallowing, noisy, dusty course,
 To win them the heavenly throne.

And on, on to war, to glee, to fight,
 To powder, to shot and shell;
 Then right, and then right, then right, right, right,
 Huzza and hurrah for hell!

O'er meads, o'er the fields, o'er rock and sand,
 Through canyon and mountain pass,
 O'er blooming and over desert land,
 In solid and singing mass.

The hearts how they swell, the souls how great,
 The sentiments rise on high,
 Excitement without the least abate,
 All eager, all roused, all spry.

And march, and then march, then march, march,
 march,
 And march in unbroken tread;
 The suns might shine down, the tongues all parch,
 Through carnage fields they be led,

They'd march, and they'd sing, and sing, sing, sing,
 'Though everything might go wrong,
 'Though this might them hunger, suffering bring,
 They'd sing their enrapturing song.

The foe might be great, the prospect drear,
 The faces grow flushed or wan,
 They'd cheer, they would cheer, and cheer, cheer,
 cheer;
 And cheering, march bravely on.

Hurrah for the war, the queen, the king,
Huzza for the wine and beer,
They 'd sing, they would sing, and succor bring,
They 'd cheer, and they 'd cheer, and cheer.

They came to the walls of sullen fort :
"Surrender!" was their demand;
But those there behind were not that sort;
They lengthy defence had planned.

"Then up with the guns, the shot and shells,
And level the thing to ground!"
And bullets and balls and leaden hells
Made dreadful and booming sound,

And splintered the walls, like pallisades
Blow down in a hurricane;
The first blow was struck to win this Hades;
Its glory was on the wane.

They butchered resistance, tore down weft;
No stone on a stone remained;
And left, and then left, and left, left, left,
Left ruins full bloody stained.

Resistance they met at every town,
But victory crowned their arms;
They battered the walls and houses down,
And spread through the land alarms

That terror and panic seized the foe
Who fled to be strongly met,
And heap on the conquerors fell woe,
With teeth in defiance set.

The day came at last when force and force
Was measured on level plain,
To battle and slay without remorse,
Till neither should rise again.

They glared at each other, while a truce
Was being arranged that each
Might put a few hours to any use
He pleased, or lend ear to speech.

Queen Mepha rode forth 'neath pennant white,
Surrounded by all her court;
Queen Diva appeared, full hate and spite,
With gallant and rich consort.

"Say on," Diva cried, "what means this rise
In fierce and unhallowed arms,
To come in this rash and uncouth wise,
And spread through our realms alarms?"—

"The question is idle, sister sweet,"
In humor hell's queen replied,
"We offer you now a safe retreat,
So you by our will abide."—

"And what is that will?" Queen Diva sneered.
"That you will revise your tone,
Your sceptre of claim and title cleared,
Our husband set on the throne."—

"So so. We refuse. Your king is dead,
So wholly we can't comply;

This hand has him lopped his royal head!"
"A wicked, malicious lie!

But if he be harmed, then woe be yours,
And all 'neath your banner ranged;
Then mercy and hope no more endures
For you, and we are estranged.

Return as you came, with curling lip;
Our arms shall our cause decide;
From sabres your heavenly blood shall drip
If we are at length defied.

Adieu!" and she galloped from the spot,
While Diva was pale with rage,
And cried: "I'll prepare you such a lot,
Such carnage and blood you wage,

Armillus shall think that he was nursed
With honey and milk and wine;
So shall you yet find your fate accursed,
So piteous shall be your whine!"

And she, too, rode off; the field was cleared;
Now might it begin, the fight;
The trumpets were blown, the horses reared;
Now providence aid the right!

The charge, how it sounded 'cross the plain!
Like monsters the armies moved,
And met with a shock of blood and pain
That ruinous, bitter proved.

Then belched forth the cannons fire and flame,
And flesh-razing, whizzing ball;
Then roars of mad pain which lines acclaim;
They struggle and fret and fall.

Then trampled the horse on luckless head,
The elephants crushed through ranks
Of harrowed detachments, gory, red,
And played them some fatal pranks.—

By all that is sacred, great and true,
I ask you, can such things be?
Can man his own brother thus down hew,
And hate him so terribly

That with their whole might and strength and main
They hound down each other's joy,
Their lands with each other's blood thus stain,
Each other defeat, destroy?

Are men, then, such beasts that arms decide
Among them, as if they wild
Rah 'round like hyenas, warfare plied
From morning till night, defiled

Their living with constant sight of blood,
And owned neither art nor sense,
Were happy alone when gory flood
Came over their wild pretense?

I trust that foul war fore'er is past,
Its measures may soon be fled,
The battle last fought indeed the last,
The feeling of carnage dead.

See but how they fly like tiger cats,
 These men, on the others down;
 How fiercely his ground each man combats—
 Is this worth a monarch's crown?

How coolly they stand and aim their shot
 One man on another! See
 How grows the thick field more fierce, more hot,
 And breeds animosity.

The crisis has come, the columns close,
 Now heaven or now hell must yield;
 So bitter were ne'er on earth two foes,
 So bloody was ne'er a field.

At last the one gains, the other falls,
 'The cries grow exultant' wild,
 And thicker and thicker rain the balls,
 And deeper 's the foeman riled.

An effort to gain the stand once lost,
 And then came the fatal flight
 At frightfully bloody, dear a cost;
 It was a disgraceful sight.

Yea, hell had her won! "Huzza, huzza!
 Hew down what you find and can!
 The victory 's ours! Hurrah, hurrah!
 Cut down every flag and man!"

In headless confusion fled the foe,
 The flight being fair' begun:
 Resistance now made no more a show—
 The day and the heaven were won!

Queen Mepha raced on to London's walls,
 And shattered the bulwarks down
 With murderous shells and gimlet balls,
 And entered the stricken town.

She galloped unto the palace door,
 Took headlong her fiery course,
 With frenzy alive unto the core,
 And sprang from her foaming horse.

She dashed up the steps, into the hall,
 And up to the royal throne
 Where Diva stood, all around the wall
 Her courtiers like men of stone

Full ranged. "It is yours," Queen Diva cried,
 "My country, my throne, my crown,
 My sceptre that reigns so far and wide,
 My palace, my ermine gown.

And more can I give; and will, in truth;
 And give will I all I've said;
 And here is the gift of gifts, in sooth,
 Your husband's devoted head!"

And shrieking the words, she drew from out
 Of royal robe's purple fold
 A head; and appalled, each bosom stout,
 However depraved and bold,

Was filled with a sickening, shocking sense;
 The head rolled at Mepha's feet,

Who, standing in ghastly, cold suspense,
 As pale as a winding sheet,

Bent down with intent and burning eye,
 And shuddered to inmost core;
 She uttered a piercing, awful cry,
 And fell on the marble floor.

Spectators grew statues at the sight,
 Or fainted, and Diva smiled,
 And gloated full o'er the fearful blight
 She had on her rival piled.

They seized on the wretch with cries of loud
 Resentment, and would have torn
 Her mantle to serve instead as shroud,
 But that she was freed their scorn

By Hugon, who held the crowd at bay,
 And thundered them to retreat
 Or they would the penalty for it pay;
 So Diva was saved their heat.

Hell triumphed, but oh, at what a cost!
 What horrors had not been done!
 The next dreadful thing to battle lost
 Is surely a battle won.

—:o;—

CANTO VI.

HELL-FIRE.

THIS wonderful how the human heart
 Is open to fiction's sway,
 How readily into action dart
 The thoughts that we reap from lay,

From romance and tale, from fancy's fields,
 From sketches of human life,
 From poem that food for purpose yields,
 From story that speaks of strife.

A man sees his hero here described,
 A woman her heroine there;
 And spite of the hits with which they're gibed,
 They gather a goodly share

Of nature from these, and bide their time
 To act as they've read these did,
 In eloquent prose and flowing rhyme,
 In novel or poem hid.

They like to resemble they admire
 Thus pictured in fervent tongue,
 And to the same acts and deeds aspire
 As they have observed there strung;

And writers of fiction are the source
 Of doings in modern life,
 Bring action to play, dictate the course
 Of mother, of maid and wife,

Of youths and of men, of love-sick boys,
Of ardent and gallant swains,
The authors of hopes, of griefs, of joys,
Of effort in wondrous strains.

Thus youths would be just such men as they
Saw pictured in idle tales,
Appear in the same romantic way,
And fill up, perchance, our jails.

Philosophers, Hamlets, *roues*, kings
Find semblance in would-be such;
Some sigh for a seraph's supple wings,
Some ache for infernal touch.

I know me a youth who'd sell his soul,
Like Faust, and indulge himself
In Croesus-like might and wealth to roll,
And fling out the golden pelf.

So maids would be Haidees, Juliets, Eves,
And Mephas as I've described,
Be goddesses or be fallen leaves,
To sin with a jewel bribed.

And wondrous it is that most would be
As wicked, as bad, as vile
As possible, if but wealth and glee
Eternally on them smile.

So Diva came out in heaven what she
On earth had her dreamt so oft,
Armillus in all his devilry
When he had attained aloft

The station he wished so much to hold;
Alas, it was over now:
What needs him his glory and his gold
When he must to death dark bow?

His tortured remains were brought away
From whence he had suffered so,
Embalmed to resist their quick decay
And laid in his kingdom low.

A monument to his might and worth
Now graces in hell his grave,
Remembers his death, infernal birth,
Commends him unto the brave.

Queen Diva, a queen no more, is held
A captive in Mepha's hand,
Her prestige, her pride, her glory felled,
Her torture and ruin planned.

They brought her to trial, ruled that she
Had murdered their liege most foul,
Condemned her to death in stern degree
Amid the enraged mob's howl.

But Mepha requested them to give
This woman to her, that she
Might then, by her own design and leave,
Speak sentence, ignominy

On her who had slain her loving king,
Had blighted her happy life,

Had done such a vile, a heartless thing,
And widowed a faithful wife.

They granted her wish as she had willed,
And Hugon and she oft met,
With feelings of dire revenge instilled,
The punishment her to set.

In chamber of regal luxury
The murderess was secured,
And treated with generosity
Armillus had ne'er endured.

And Mepha and Hugon entered there
To tell her what they'd decreed;
They found her on knee, at silent prayer,
Indulging in faith and creed.

Queen Mepha grew crimson, as, in scorn
She bid the fair captive rise:
"I wished that I never had been born
Since you have bedimmed my eyes.

You drove in the rapier to the hilt;
What prayer can your crime condole?
How dare you approach a God when guilt
So heavily burdens your soul?

Then up, lest my wrath be not aroused
To visit on you the pain
You have in my king, my husband housed,
So pitiful, monstrous slain.

You know what your judges granted me:
That I should decide your fate;
I come to impart you my decree,
How highly your crime I rate.

I offer you freedom, station, gold
If you will forswear your creed,
Your faith a confess delusion hold,
Its tenets in heaven stamped.

Refuse, and I give you o'er to death:
So have you Armillus told:
I utter the words in like fell breath,
My arms for an answer fold."

Then Diva arose, th' unruffled brow
As set and as pale as though
It changed into spotless marble now,
And faced her determined foe;

Her lips were as colorless, her eye
Forbiddingly rolled, her cheek
Was ashen, while raven dye
Was gathered in frantic freak

Just over the lids; she tried to say
A fitting reply to this,
But obstinate did her tongue fixed stay;
The answer turned out a hiss.

"Speak not," went on Mepha, "if you choke
With words that will bear no speech;
Your faith you will not, I see, revoke;
Then listen, nor me beseech.

Armillus is dead. Why did he die?
Because he has answered you
As you have this moment made reply
To me. That, I think, is true.

And more, he was tortured cruelly,
And racked was his soul and frame;
Shall you suffer less of Mepha, me?
That would be indeed a shame.

I have it at heart to bid you go,
And nevermore forin and face
In these my infernal regions show,
But such would not please the grace

Of Congress, nor heal my wounded pride;
So must I not think of that;
This day must your destiny decide,
Your fate you with nerve combat.

No punishment can be too severe
For such an atrocious crime:
So start not your sentence now to hear,
How judgment and justice chime!

You were a great queen. A queen ne'er takes
Advantage of throne and crown,
Her dignity, mercy ne'er forsakes
To hew an offender down.

Therefore that you outraged royal throne,
Shall sit you, in mockery,
On brow a huge crown, this to atone.
You think this a mild decree?

That is because you have lost the sense
Of honor. But I've not done.
To womanhood made you, too, pretense;
But woman would such deeds shun

As you have performed in woman's name.
The chastisement must be rude:
In public must you expose your shame,
To pillar be bounden, nude.

I see that you do not even blush,
Nor faster comes forth your breath;
Yet would I not stand in sullen hush
But pray of my judge my death

The sooner than suffer such disgrace.
What wot you of shame and pride
That stand me before with brazen face,
When horror and grief 't should hide?

That chastises woman and queen, but there
Remains yet the mortal deed,
Who murders, must death herself here bear;
No smaller can be her meed.

Yours was an infernal, fiendish act,
And fiendish must be th' reward,
So cannot the reins for you be slack'd,
Nor edged off for you the sword.

Then be you condemned, to-morrow morn,
As which it is known with us,

To be of your cloak and vestments torn,
Be crowned, and to be led thus

Along the full-peopled avenues
E'en unto the *Place Vendome*,
Exposed to the rude and brutal views
Of those who about you roam.

There shall you be fastened to the stake,
With fagots around you piled,
And these shall be lit for judgment's sake,
And you shall be martyr styled

To Christian belief, hypocrisy,
To which you might well aspire;
And so shall it end, your misery,
In horror, in pain, hell-fire."

And Diva said not a word, but turned
From Mepha's stern look away,
But unto the soul the speech had burned,
And kindled a fearful fray.

And Mepha and Hugon left her to
Her anguish, her shame, her grief,
Forgetfulness of her fate to woo,
To cling to her vain belief.

She slept not a wink athrough the night,
But waited in mad dismay
For Mepha's revenge and all its fright,
In shame to be brought away.

They came at the hour as they had said,
And merciless, cruel hands
Tore down from the heart that anguished bled
Its shroud at the queen's commands.

She stood in her beauty, nude and bare,
With angry and crimson face,
And bosom that heaved with high-wrought care,
In all her fine, native grace.

They led her away into the street
Where thousands were bent to see
The murderess from their gaze retreat
In horror and misery.

They bound her unto the stake, and lit
The fagots about her feet;
They saw the alarm her brow o'erflit,
They saw how that heart wild 'd beat.

The wind caught the flame and wrapped it 'round
The supple and girlish form;
And higher and fiercer 'rose the sound
Of voices into a storm.

And as the flames grew and licked her breast,
She uttered a fearful shriek
That added unto the tumult zest,
Augmented its cruel freak.

It crackles and hisses 'bout the limbs,
And blisters the marble skin,
And frenzies the eye that fairly brims
With terror amid the din.

The lips tried in vain to hold the cries
That 'rose from the throbbing heart
Now bursting in such a horrid wise,
Receiving so dire a dart.

The orbs from their sockets started out,
The fingers clutched wild' in air;
And louder and madder 'rose the shout
From those who 'd assembled there.

And so it went on, until the fire
Had finished its fearful task,
Until it had done the queen's desire,
Who might in her triumph bask.

But triumph not hovered in that eye,
Naught but a subdued, sad care,
A fever she could not from them cry,
In silence and grief must bear.

And Diva's soul sped unto the shell
That clasped that huge universe,
And fled from this horror, pain and hell,
Its monarch to hate and curse.

Queen Mepha but lived to nurse the boy
Armillus had her conceived;
He now was her last, her only joy,
As well it may be believed.

And Hugon took pride in tutorship
Until he succumbed to years;
He blessed him with quivering, dying lip,
And fled the infernal cares.

Queen Mepha soon followed in the wake,
Bowed down with her sorrow, and
Awoke in the future, there to take
Of hell in its train command.

Armillus she saw not there, for he
Had fled to another sphere;
She carried his sacred memory
Unto the remotest tear.

Prince Mara assumed the reins of hell,
And royally wore the crown;
They say he performed the service well;
We'll leave him to his renown.

Now reader, we bid this hell adieu;
If there we perchance should meet,
Most cordially will I welcome you.
So far is my song complete.

I've led you through sorrow and through night,
To heaven have I e'en you drawn;
Now have we to greet but one more light:
Of reason the glorious dawn!

— THE END OF THE CONQUEST OF HEAVEN. —



BOOK V.

THE DAWN OF REASON.

CANTO I.

THE DAWN OF REASON.

I BREATHE again, as though I come
Once more into the light
From out of fancy cumbersome,
From out of gloomy night,

From out a cave of dark design,
And issue into day,
And hail the sun's effulgent shine
To bask within each ray.

Yet do I feel a deep regret
To leave that hell behind,
In memory's oblivion set,
Dismiss it from the mind.

I fondled every phase and thought
That led my soul to dwell,
With so much animation fraught,
On this my cherished hell.

I have not done it justice, I
Know well ; that makes me sad ;
Yet did I earnest' seek and try
To make it bright and glad.

I mixed much chaff with glowing wheat ;
Too much, I fear, to please ;
I spoke much madness in my heat,
And uttered much to freeze.

But lo, the thing is done, nor would
One line I now drop out ;
I've said enough that you not should
My thought and purpose doubt.

And now that I've the burdens off
My mind that it oppressed,
I am prepared to meet your scoff,
And let damnation rest.

I feel less bitter than I felt
Now I my mind have said ;
My topic shall be gentler dealt
In what 's yet to be read.

The light affects the sight that roved
Through realms of sombre hue,
And each gaunt, spectral aspect loved,
The devil gave his due.

The glare's too great, but time will give
It back its strength and use,
For brighter views and scenes to live,
With laughter more in truce.

So you who followed me along
Through death and hellish life,
Who saw but horror in my song
Prolonged and fearful strife,

Read to the end, and brighter views
Will I to you unfold,
No more distract' with torture's hues,
Nor feelings hot and cold.

I bid you leave the scenes where war
Had just so bitter' raged,
And left the fancy sad and sore,
And sympathy engaged,

For fresher scenes where tropic' calms,
And perfume-laden mists
Dream through the zephyr's fragrant balms,
And sweet, secluded trysts.

Look on the still meridian sea,
So beautiful and blue,
Asplash with murmuring harmony,
The golden rays to woo

That scintillate upon its face,
And burn into its breast,
Its innermost confines to trace,
With loving, ardent zest.

A single sun 's upon the sky
To laugh upon the wave :
Where may my scene, then, think you, lie
Before, beyond the grave ?

Before. For we are back on earth,
The same that saw the breath
Armillus there acquired at birth
Fierce' given o'er to death.

The sea lies golden, blue and green
In lonely splendor there,
A dazzling, dreamy, beauteous scene ;
The heat hangs in the air

With heavy grace, and seems to lie
Upon the flashing glass
With heaving breath, in lullaby,
A mobile, glowing mass.

No shore as far as eye can reach,
 No far-off, swelling sail,
 No cloud, no albatross's screech,
 No sign of nighing gale.

It rocked in ceaseless heave and swell,
 As though 'twere breathing hard,
 With burdens on its soul to tell
 Unto some idle bard.

My soul is rocked upon its peace
 Into a languid haze,
 Its fearful passions gradual' cease
 Into a loving maze

For natural delights and joys,
 'Though not less earnest they,
 Not altogether silly toys
 To fill a rhythmic lay :

For every scene and every view
 Has deeper sense for me
 Than merely born in brilliant hue
 Of childish harmony.

I see the world with other eyes,
 Through other glasses' cut,
 Observe its every move and wise,
 Spy in its every rut,

With laden heart of deep design
 Seen in its every trace,
 Seen in its every curve and line,
 In its expressive face.

I am no thorough pessimist
 To note the death in life,
 Its sweets with horrid venom kissed,
 Its peace distract' with strife.

But all seems as if all were not
 As much and earnest' seen
 As I should wish, as though a spot
 Were shadowed on the screen.

These people live their every day,
 And labor at their task,
 Or spend their time at idle play,
 But never stop to ask

The meaning of what meets them here,
 This play, this life, this work ;
 They pause not in their dull career,
 Their labor do not shirk.

All thoughts of hence are answered by
 The verdict of a priest ;
 They pass all other edict by
 As coming last and least.

A man should smile at every sight
 As though he knew it well,
 As though familiar with its light,
 And could its purpose tell ;

Nor should a scene be so much new
 That he should at it start

If seen at first ; he should be true
 To his exalted part.

There is a meaning in all things,
 Or they were not at all ;
 The beggars and the highest kings
 Come under one same thrall

Of wisdom, accident and whirl ;
 And he that sees in dross
 The truth-imparting, shimmering pearl,
 Sees half the way across

This life ; who sees the rest of way,
 Is truly great a man ;
 He holds the threads of this great fray,
 And may its purpose span.

So every man who lives at all
 Should be, and know the truth,
 Conversant with his state and call,
 His living and his youth.

Alas, the world lives on, and dies,
 And lives again, to live
 On lying lives and living lies,
 With not a thought to give

To undercurrent ways and means,
 Except some chosen few
 Who study out the sense of scenes,
 And take the proper view.

The naked truth is fright to see,
 'Tis true, as Schiller wrote,
 But should not be a mystery
 On which the people dote.

Humanity is racked with vice,
 With sin, dishonor, shame,
 With fashion paid with heavy price,
 With pretense hollow, lame.

The passions of a by-gone age
 Which graced the public mind,
 With falsity and treason wage,
 And follow far behind.

To-day a friend 's a friend as long
 As interest bids him be
 Sincere at heart, but will go wrong
 At opportunity.

For gold a man will sell his name,
 His every virtue blight ;
 A woman sacrifice her fame,
 And bury shame from sight.

A smile derides a noble thought
 That chimes not with success,
 Consideration counts for naught,
 And pity meets distress.

But all this filth may pass away,
 Humanity be saved,
 And live to see another day,
 In virtue's glory laved.

Look to the stars for the reply
To nature's mighty scheme,
And let us pass the present by
As though it were a dream.

Philosophy will teach how much
We all have yet to learn,
What wonders yet to reach and touch,
To what our minds to turn.

The sentiment of priestly lore
Must first be blotted out,
Expunged unto the deepest core,
And given up to doubt.

Then may we swell with brighter looks
Into the vast design
Of nature's yet unopened books,
And read their every line.

All earth is yet in state so crude,
That thinkers must astound
To see how knowledge is yet nude,
And by delusion bound.

But that will change; the vista clears,
And breaks into delight
To kiss away the idle tears
That now bedim the sight.

Look on the sea, the shimmering sea,
Warm' nestled in the sun,
And note another regency
In beauty there begun.

Look on the light, the love of day,
And think it is the note
That sounds the darker thoughts away,
And sets new joys afloat.

My hell was blotched with incident
Most foul in many a line,
But ever on the truthful bent;
And ne'er did right repine.

But glorious is the on-come ray
Of dreamy, hazy light:
See where it basks within the day,
A diamond to the sight.

Look on the sea, the breathing sea,
And let its mighty swell
Now be your feelings' ministry,
And chase the shades of hell

Into the past; let merry glee
Find entrance in your heart,
And float with me upon the sea,
The gurgling brine athwart.

Thou peaceful sea, thou splendid sea,
Thou breathing field of peace,
I sing to thee, I melt with thee
Into each watery crease.

I lean to thee, I sink in thee,
I fall into thy dream,

I drown in thee, thou tender sea,
I fade into thy beam.

I burn with all the heat the sun
Pours down into thy soul,
I turn to thee with facile run
Of pen, in thee to roll.

But look, what is that thing I wist
There floating on the wave,
Half woven in the crested mist,
As risen from the grave?

It is a head, a human head,
With earnest, up-turned eye,
There rising from the watery bed,
And ever coming nigh.

I know that head, I know that face,
I know that eye, that mien,
And so do you know every grace
In lineament there seen.

There is but one who has that look,
Who owns that noble brow;
He cannot be misjudged, mistook;
It is himself, I vow.

'Tis he himself, Armillus, my
Loved hero there I see;
Do you him welcome here as I
Now welcome him with glee.

It is not o'er, his strange career;
His mission 's not fulfilled;
He has not wept his latest tear,
His latest passion stilled.

He lives again to fight anew
The problem of the age,
Until the wrong shall beg the true
No further war to wage.

I see it in his steadfast glance
That he is born again
To throw another crushing lance
At clerical disdain,

And rise above the havoc made
Of superstition's force
With reason's unpolluted blade,
Thus follow on his course.

He has outlived a two-fold death
To see another sphere
Of action, to revive in breath,
To make himself more dear

To such as I, and such as you,
If you have sympathy
For what is right and what is true,
And will with sense agree.

Oh cannot you now understand
The world is shaking off
Rank orthodoxy's heavy hand?
Can you mistake the scoff

With which is met the faith of old,
 Now reason's on the dawn,
 Now common sense has grown more bold,
 And will no longer fawn

On usage as expressed in prayer
 And worship for a God?
 Last century I could not dare
 On you this wise to trod.

They would have burned me on the stake
 For this infernal song,
 But now they will to heart me take,
 'Though much be crude and wrong.

The world's awakening from its dream
 Of bleak theology,
 And reason soon will stand supreme
 To shame your heresy.

It is for this Armillus comes
 Once more: to end the work,
 To raise you from your senses' slums,
 To drive you from your kirk,

To teach you now to throw aside
 To what so long you 've clung,
 And set afloat you on the tide
 Of wisdom rightly sung.

You must explore the skies above
 With other eyes and thought,
 With quite another sense and love,
 In different meaning caught.

You must appreciate that we
 Have much to search and learn,
 You must in our new industry
 In ardor with us burn

To solve the mystery of life,
 Of action and of sense,
 Of nature's ever changing strife,
 And lay aside pretense

To antiquated monkish lore
 As obsolete and blind,
 And cease your Savior to adore;
 He has been too unkind

With you in all but in his theme
 Of sweet fraternity;
 For that may hold you him in dream;
 The rest is lunacy.

Armillus lives again; all hail
 To him; learn him to love;
 Forsake the standard proven frail,
 Nor hope for things above.

'Tis but the Anglo-Saxon race
 That holds on to the cross,
 Except the herds whose sunken face
 Is pallid with the dross

Of Catholic design and fraud;
 All else have turned to sense,

Cast off the cruel, misty God—
 Why will not you commence?

You will commence, you do commence,
 You will yet think with shame
 That you believed this mad pretense,
 Theocracy wild, lame.

Look on where proud Armillus floats
 Into another clime,
 And on the self-same mission dotes
 Through all his three lives' time.

His brow is heavy with the load
 Of what lies factured there,
 Philosophy to spur and goad
 Into a better care.

He floats along, he drifts along
 On with the listless tide,
 Adown with my infernal song,
 The cleric' sharks defied.

He floats all day, he drifts all night;
 And, on another morn,
 A far-off shore looms into sight,
 The misty curtain torn.

It is a sweet and verdant isle
 There nestling on the sea,
 Lit up by old King Sol's bright smile;
 The birds pipe merrily,

The leaves flap languor, woods breathe shade,
 The surf sing well along,
 The quadrupeds hide in the glade,
 The zephyr joins the song.

Armillus lands upon the beach
 As manly and as nude
 As though escaped a sea-nymph's reach,
 With energy imbued.

And as he pierces with his look
 The forest there outstretched,
 There come from out its every nook
 In sombre nature etched,

A throng of dusky forms, to spy
 The guest upon their shore,
 To learn the wherefore and the why
 He comes, and what's in store.

They welcome him with friendly mien,
 And bid him come more near;
 They place him food upon the green,
 And water flashing clear.

And he partakes of food and drink,
 And dusky maidens' smile,
 Who half approach and half off shrink,
 Without a sense of guile.

And they receive him in their mid,
 And touch his soft, white skin,
 And him a hearty welcome bid;
 His like they ne'er had seen.

The men extend a friendly hand,
And seat him at their side,
As though to bid him join their band,
And choose himself a bride.

Armillus looked upon the scene,
And seemed to guess its sense;
He had not lived for naught yestreen
In the infernal hence.

He saw his mission on this isle,
And took the task to heart,
And went about it in his style
To play his blessed part.

And as he oped his lips to speak,
He saw he knew their tongue;
This was no silly nature's freak
On vanity him hung.

And they rejoiced to hear his word
In accents known so well,
In measures they had always heard
Each one the other tell.

And so Armillus soon became
One of that dusky band;
Familiar grew his splendid name
Within that sunny band.

He studied them in all their ways,
Their faith, their mode of life;
He joined them in their sports and plays,
Their hunts and daily strife.—

Thus happened it Armillus 'rose
Once more upon the earth,
To heal of its fanatic woes
The globe that saw his birth.

Nor Christ, Mahommed, India's Buddh,
Nor Hiawath's fame,
Confucius with his honors stud,
Might equal him in name.

Where these had dawned upon earth's parts,
And banners there unfurled,
Armillus won all nations' hearts,
And blessed th' entire world.

—:O:—

CANTO II.

THE HISTORY OF A FAITH.

THE tropic' sun in golden phase
Sent down its dazzling gold
In ardent zest and sultry blaze,
In mighty rays unrolled,

Upon the bright, devoted isle
There grown from out the sea,

In sweet repose and verdant smile,
And swelling harmony.

Its centre 'rose into a mount
High towering in the air
With bold disdain and wooded flout,
The skies to pert' outstare.

And there, upon the summit's height,
Two figures stood outlined
Against the sun's refulgent light,
Extended view to find.

Armillus was the one, with eyes
Turned out upon the wave,
In solemn and majestic wise;
A dusky warrior brave,

A nerveful youth, companion he
Unto the other stood;
Both gazed upon the breathless sea,
Each in a thoughtful mood.

"What is that spot," Armillus asked,
"The far horizon nigh,
In misty, vaporous distance basked,
I yet distinctly spy?"

Thine eyes have doubtless' long explored
What may the vision mean,
And to its nature frequent' soared;
Thou know'st what 'tis, I ween."—

"That, sir, is yet another isle
Like this on which we stand,
A verdant and volcanic pile
Of ocean-laved high land."—

"What say'st thou, then, to thither hie
In yonder thy canoe?
I gladly would our neighbors spy:
Are they, too, dark of hue?"

The dusky youth stepped back a pace
As if in dire alarm,
And gazed upon the other's face;
Then caught him by the arm:

"Unhappy man, gainsay the thought;
Ne'er steer there thy canoe;
That were with greatest peril fraught;
That islet is taboo!"—

"'Taboo!' How so? What means the word?
And why art thou so pale?
Such accent strange I never heard;
Why must not there I sail?"—

"Because a sacrilege were that,
Here punished but with death:
Nor could thy friends thy fate combat;
It were thy latest breath."—

"A sacrilege, to see that isle?
Why, what is there to see
To bring on death? Thou mak'st me smile;
Or dost thou scoff at me?"

The native's eye with horror blazed ;
 He knelt upon the sod ;
 In superstitious terror gazed
 As though upon a god,

On that far isle. " Arise, arise,"
 Armillus earnest' cried,
 " And tell me, in thy calmest wise,
 What may out there be spied."—

" Then say not that I scoff at thee
 When of that isle I speak ;
 My endless woe and misery
 Were such a sinful freak."

And as he spoke, he grew more calm,
 And even smiled again ;
 It seemed at end, the passing qualm.
 " Come, Loti, me explain

What means this terror on thy part,
 And what it has to do,
 That thou shouldst thus go and start,
 With what thou call'st taboo ?"

And Loti heaved a heavy sigh,
 And knit his dusky brow ;
 And gazed into the azure sky,
 As though 't should him endow

With facile speech to tell his tale :
 He pressed his woolly head,
 That it might now his tongue not fail ;
 And this is what he said :

" A many years ago the ground
 On which we live and stand,
 Was yet not to be seen and found ;
 There was no such green land.

This was, like all the watery rest,
 A briny, flowing sea,
 A foaming waste at winds' behest,
 Or calm monotony.

And yonder isle, so small to sight,
 Was all the spot we knew,
 On which we had full many a fight ;
 There prospered we and grew.

We were a mighty nation then,
 Which all its neighbors speared,
 When men were eaten up by men,
 Whom all their foemen feared.

We waged great wars with other tribes
 Far down toward the south,
 Who trembled at our bloody gibes,
 And filled our hungry mouth.

We 'rose in power until we'd won
 All rebels to our crown,
 Full smiled on by fair fortune's sun ;
 We owned a great renown.

We knew no god but then our king,
 A mighty warrior he,

Who let us dance and feast and sing ;
 The scourge of all the sea.

We multiplied, and lived serene',
 And had a splendid trade
 With nations far beyond our scene,
 So was our fortune made.

Until, one day, a gallant ship
 Bore down upon our shores,
 Of swelling sails and graceful dips ;
 With sturdily swept oars

Its crew approached us in its boats,
 And came into our mid,
 In new blue shirts and gold-trimmed coats ;
 They were not welcome bid :

We'd had a feast, and mind and brain
 Were crazed with ardent drink ;
 It proved our downfall and our bane ;
 To tell it, do I shrink.

The crew was seized upon and bound,
 The ship was robbed and burned,
 The women outraged whom we found,
 And pleas for mercy spurned.

And when the fearful crime was done,
 And we were wrapped in sleep,
 The sun its daily course had run,
 And silence on the deep

Dark' reigned, there was a rumbling noise,
 And smoke filled through the air,
 A fearful damp upon our joys,
 That filled our hearts with care.

The very bottom of the isle
 Was shaken, and the ground
 Upheaved, high did the billows pile,
 And made a dreadful sound.

And high upon the mountain steep
 In centre of the land,
 There did a crimson fountain leap,
 To terrify our band.

A shower of rocks and earth rained down,
 And higher 'rose the flame ;
 In ashes lay our woods and town ;
 A fright us all o'ercame.

We ran like shadows here and there,
 And wailed aloud and cried ;
 Destruction was our monarch's share :
 Struck down, that night he died.

And many a promising fine boy,
 And daughter fair to see,
 Their parents' life and hope and joy,
 Too, ended shamefully,

Crushed under falling stones and trees,
 Or swallowed by a wave,
 That we did to the marrow freeze ;
 Whole families found their grave

E'er yet the worst had come upon
Our isle, for ere the morn
Was seen on eastern line to dawn,
No tree was there not torn

With all its roots from out the sod,
No stone not moved from base ;
It was the first we knew of God ;
We ne'er had seen His face.

This was to punish us for all
Our crime and shame and sin ;
He let us feel His wrath and thrall
In deafening, fiery din.

He stood upon the mountain's height,
And thundered down His rage
With flaming eye and direful blight ;
Our grief might none assuage.

And none escaped but those who dashed
Themselves into the sea ;
These, battling with the waves, were washed
Upon the isle that we

Now stand upon, come up that night
From out beneath the brine ;
No tree or shrub was there in sight
On which the sun might shine.

In after years, the rocky pile
Changed into what may'st view
In this so richly verdured isle
Soft' pillowed on the blue.

We ne'er went near the woeful scene
That saw our nation's fall
For many a year, but reared this green
And blooming tract ; and all

Are once more happy as can be,
And thrive and laugh once more ;
We have no power, but yet we're free,
And love our mother shore.

Since then the angry God has done
No further violence ;
The green's to spout once more begun
In forests dark and dense

On yonder late forsaken land,
And now it blooms again ;
But it is lost to our command,
As thou shalt of me wain.

Some fifteen years ago, one night,
There was an awful gale ;
A ship went down before our sight,
From water-line to sail :

And there was thrown on shore a man
Who clasped a little child ;
Full mountain-high the billows ran,
The wind raged fierce and wild.

That man and child we lodged and fed,
And nursed through pain and ill ;

They were so fagged, we deemed them dead,
They lay so cold and still.

But they revived, and then we found
We'd saved a holy two ;
They dwell upon yon hallowed ground,
The island called taboo.

The stranger thanked us for our care
In deep and broken tongue,
Commended us for cheer and fare,
Our hands us kindly wring.

And then he told us he had come,
A prophet, to defend
Our nation and our island from
God's wrath, and he would send

Full many a prayer unto the grace
Divine, and live a life
Devout before the godly face,
And spare us further strife.

He taught us many themes of wise
Design and import good,
And brought the tears into our eyes,
In earnest, tender mood.

He preached fraternity and love,
Morality and peace,
And vowed we all should meet above,
If we our sins would cease,

In realms of balmy, rare delight,
Of joy, and endless feast,
A field of marvels to the sight,
Of woe and error fleeced.

He said the God was just' incensed
At all our bloody crimes,
But we might of our sins be cleansed,
And gain those beauteous climes

He spoke about, if we'd be meek,
And bow unto his power ;
Then would he grace us all bespeak ;
It was a gladsome hour.

He dwelt upon the mercy throned
Upon the godly brow,
The love for all of us ensconced
There ; we had but to hew

Our heads, and fall upon our knees,
And yonder turn our view,
Then were we sure the God to please ;
Our troubles would be few.

And then he gave our sons command
To row him to yon isle ;
Our warriors lent a willing hand ;
He left us with a smile.

A few days later he returned,
But came without his child ;
Much holiness we of him learned,
He was so good and mild.

He told us he had been to hear
The pleasure of our God,
And brought us word and welcome cheer
To cherish on our sod.

He said that he would settle down
Upon that isle in prayer,
And win for us the heavenly crown
The God him promised there.

If we had troubles, we should light
A fire on this our shore,
And he would come to set us right,
And weal for us implore,

If he our troubles fearful found;
Else would he simply ask
The God our misery to bound,
And lighten us our task.

And every morn and every eve
Should we kneel down and pray,
And for salvation should not grieve
While o'er us peace held sway.

And he forbade us e'er to near
The islet there in view,
Or we should our destruction fear,
For that ground was taboo.

And from that day we've never seen
Our prophet, for we fare
Us happy; sad we've since not been,
And we've had ne'er a care.

He dwells there still, for oft we see
The fires he lights at night
Unto our weal and ministry,
Within the godly sight.

We often send him food and wine
Secure within a boat
With swelling sail, when, in that line
The wind blows fresh', to float

The messenger of love across
The water to his shore,
And we have never known a loss
To him we so adore.

And once, not many moons ago,
There came a vision sweet
Across the waves, in saintly glow,
Us tenderly to greet,

And thanked us for our kindly gifts
From him who is our priest;
She brought the words with blushing shifts,
Her loveliness increased.

Our people fell to earth at sight
Of her who lives in grace;
She was so beautiful and bright,
Had such a lovely face.

She wore a garb of spotless hue
About the supple shape;

Her eyes were dark and deep and true,
And sparkling as the grape.

Her tresses black flew in the breeze,
And waved us her farewell;
We watched her from the highest trees
Far out upon the swell

Until her craft was lost to view,
And landed on the isle
Which was than her no more taboo,
She with the tender smile.

Methinks our prophet sent her here
To show us what a pearl
We had to shed for us a tear,
In this so lovely girl.

The heart of every youth around
Was touched with burning fire,
But as she is divinely crowned,
They cannot but admire

At distance, for it were their death
That island to invade;
To risk for her the wrathful breath
Of him, they are afraid.

So now thou knowest why that land
Is not for us to view,
Since it is our loved priest's command
That it must be taboo,

And so remain, or else we die
In night and horror out;
We would not have our end so nigh,
Nor bring on woe and rout.

I, too, was fired of that fair form,
And of those melting eyes,
But I crushed out my passion's storm,
For she is not a prize

To win, in this our nether life,
For love and quiet bliss,
To be a warrior's slave and wife,
To fondle and to kiss."

And Loti heaved a heavy sigh,
And wiped away a tear;
Armillus stood in pity by;
He held the savage dear.

And then our hero turned away
To brood upon the words
He just had heard the young man say
In rude, pathetic surds.

Here lay his mission well defined:
To fell this narrow creed,
To see its tenets undermined,
And plant another seed.

And then he thought upon the maid—
Queen Mepha, where was she?
His love for her, I am afraid,
Lies buried in the sea.

He dreamt of other kiss and bliss ;
 He had not ceased to be ;
 He'd find other love in this
 Infernal comedy.

He gazed upon the far-off isle,
 Aflash with thought and fire ;
 And Loti's story with a smile
 He paused to still admire

For its simplicity, its want
 Of tenure and of base,
 A thing to mock, to strike, to taunt
 Fair reason to her face.

So every faith has grown from out
 A simple, small event,
 Gives over common sense to doubt
 And idle sentiment.

Thus, in old Egypt's infant days,
 Before that fabled sod
 E'er knew of priesthood's tricks and ways,
 Before it knew a god,

The Nile arose from out its banks
 To flood the dried-up fields,
 And earned the fellah's fervent thanks
 For richer, larger yields.

And every time the flood on came,
 There came the dog-star too ;
 And so that star achieved a fame
 It never sought nor knew.

The fellah thanked the twinkling star
 For raising up the Nile
 From out its bed o'er meadows far
 And near ; and, e'er a while,

The star was worshiped as a god ;
 A faith was the result ;
 The fellah knelt and kissed the rod,
 And bowed to creeds occult.

And since that day all nations bowed
 Aside the fellah down,
 And cried for heaven and grace aloud :
 Not less has the renown

Of that bright, worshiped star since grown,
 But that the star has changed
 Here into flesh, there into stone,
 Through many doctrines ranged.

Armillus thought upon the birth
 Of faith with earnest smile ;
 It had since won th' entire earth,
 And, too, that far-off isle.

It was for him to strip it off
 The human heart and mind,
 Expose its articles to scoff,
 And tear from off the blind

And sunken eye of active thought
 The creed that holds it dark,

That had it wrongful vision wrought,
 And kept out reason's spark.

These dusky fools were not less mad
 Than those in cities dwell,
 Their ignorance was no less sad ;
 It was the self-same spell

That binds all ignorant and dull
 Of men into one band,
 The same delights from faith to cull
 Of grace and angel-land.

Our hero would not leave them to
 Their terror, and belief
 In idle myths, a maid to woo,
 The daughter of a thief

Of intellect, of common sense,
 Of thought in reason's glow ;
 He'd show how lame this man's pretense :
 The thief would have to go.

His daughter fair might yet be pure ;
 And he, our hero, young ;
 His heart could still a love endure ;
 He was not much unstrung

By tenfold love and twofold death
 And one devoted wife,
 By heavenly gasp and hellish breath ;
 He was yet good for life.

"When I return unto this shore,"
 He said, "'twill be to teach
 That he whom they so much adore
 Is hardly fit to preach

Them faith and heaven and creed and hell ;
 They need these not at all ;
 They lived without these things as well ;
 Nor labor 'neath their thrall

Shall they while I own strength and nerve
 The villain to unmask,
 Him from his throne and path to swerve,
 And take him hard to task.

I'll go and see what he is like,
 And him his daughter woo,
 Examine him e'er I shall strike
 A blow at his taboo."

Armillus hastened to the strand ;
 He felt so strong and brave ;
 He looked upon the promised land,
 And plunged into the wave.

—:O:—

CANTO III.

THE SHATTERED CROSS.

ARMILLUS swam athrough the eve,
 And swam athrough the night,
 And swam until the shades took leave
 Of earth, and proud to sight

The sun arose the morrow morn
To smile upon the shore
Where that benighted faith was born,
These fools learnt to adore.

He reached it safely, sank adown
In weariness of limb
Upon the sand, in study brow;
The isle he'd left, so dim

To view, it seemed a floating spot
Far out upon the sea;
It was a strange, adventurous lot
This man's, you will agree.

And when he'd rested, he arose
With flashing mien and eye,
Full ready to receive the foes
Of reason, and defy

Unto his teeth this meddling priest,
And tear away the screen,
With so much bold presumption creased,
As though it ne'er had been.

He looked upon his strange attire:
A cloth girt 'round his loins,
With nothing else there to inspire,
Nor gifts, nor golden coins,

This charlatan; his dignity
As hero to sustain,
Wherein to wrap his vanity,
And end this foolish reign.

His soft, white skin shone in the beams
Of sunlight strewn about;
His eyes looked forth with piercing gleams
Of confidence; no doubt

Was in them traced of his success
In this his mission there;
He saw naught but the priest's distress
Which he him yet would bear.

He entered on the forest's shade
Outspread before his view,
The foe-man's precincts to invade,
E'en to his purpose true.

Here fled a startled bird from sight
Into a higher branch,
There chased a quadruped with fright
He had surprised by chance;

But naught about showed signs of life
Of mortal hand's design;
No axe nor plow disturbed the strife
Of nature, to combine

'Gainst further growth of primitive,
Primeval brush and rock,
A modern aspect things to give,
And raise another stock.

The peace that lay upon the scene
Was grateful and intense,

And so enwrapped he ne'er had been
By nature's influence.

With measured pace he went his way,
Awake in eye and ear,
To sight the young and beauteous fay,
The slightest noise to hear.

He strayed about, nor knowing where
The weary search would end;
To call aloud, he did not dare,
For here there was no friend

To guide him to the priest's abode;
The priest himself might hear,
And slay him, as he onward strode,
With coward' stroke in rear

From out some covert ambush aimed,
And that would never do;
To bear defeat, he was ashamed;
He 'd win o'er this taboo.

The hours wore by, and still no sign
Of temple, house or hut
To which his footsteps to incline,
Whereto his path to cut.

But still he would persist and search;
He must at some time find
This worshiped couple's hidden perch,
And let them know his mind.

And presently, a rising ground
Invited an ascent;
With eager haste and rapid bound,
Until his breath was spent,

Armillus flew unto the height,
Where now he wondering stood;
Here was the whole outstretched to sight,
To brighten up his mood.

He was no longer lame nor stiff,
Nor careworn in his mien;
He stood upon a mantling cliff;
Below, the waves were seen

With sullen wash to rinse the sand;
He thanked the long-sought chance
By which he might survey the land
At one broad, sweeping glance.

And out upon the furthest ledge,
There stood a ranch, and crude,
As if in balance on the edge,
Which now Armillus viewed

With wrapt intent; he stepped unto
The threshold, to surprise
The unsuspecting inmates who
Had never met his eyes.

But he was disappointed, for
No one was there within;
From broken hinges hung the door,
As though for long time 'd been

No tenant there to stir the ash
 Upon the rude stone grate ;
 The roof had suffered 'neath some crash
 Of falling rock ; no plate

Or dish was there upon the shelf ;
 Upon the bed of leaves,
 There slumbered no entrancing elf ;
 The roof was bare of sheaves.

A night-bird fluttered into light,
 And winged off with a cry
 Into the verdant forest's night,
 The bold intruder by.

It seemed the hut had long been left
 To ruin and decay,
 Of every care and comfort 'reft,
 To 'wait the latest day.

Armillus stood irresolute,
 Nor knowing what was next
 To do or come, and he was mute
 In thought, and sore' perplexed.

And as he frowned upon his luck,
 There fluttered from the wood
 His idle stare about amuck,
 E'en up to where he stood,

A turtle-dove ; it was so tame,
 It settled on a branch
 Right by his side ; and after came
 Unto the crazy ranch,

A ringing peal of laughter from
 A sweet and silvery voice
 That struck his every feeling dumb,
 And made his heart rejoice.

This could but be the beauteous girl
 Whom Loti had so praised ;
 He was at last to see this pearl ;
 High was his interest raised.

His eye flashed light, his heart beat fast,
 A tremor shook his frame ;
 In expectation he was cast
 As him there never came

Again, or he experienced had
 In brightest days gone by ;
 So was his heart now wild and glad,
 So did his pulses fly.

The bushes parted—there they stood
 In wonder face to face ;
 No pen or pencil ever could
 You reproduce the grace,

The fluttering coyness, supple charms
 Of that sweet nymph, abashed,
 There palpitating with alarms,
 In whose fair vision clashed

The rarest beauty, freshest youth,
 The greatest, deepest soul,

With eyes that shone with love and truth,
 In innocence did roll.

Her faultless limbs were half exposed,
 And, too, the heaving breast ;
 So had ne'er classic statue posed ;
 Who sighted her, was blessed.

She came of pure Caucasian stock,
 But into dusky tan
 Had grown the skin and waving lock
 That 'round her forehead ran.

About the 'luring form was wound
 A loose and spotless sheet,
 A wreath of flowers clasped around
 The waist ; and on the feet

Were moccasins of curious weft,
 Worn 'gainst the stones and sand ;
 A stick she 'd carried in her left,
 But now dropped from the hand.

A leafy crown adorned her head :
 Just parted were her lips :
 They looked so sweet, so ripe, so red ;
 She crimsoned to the tips

Of ruffled brows ; she held her breath ;
 Armillus was entranced ;
 Here would he suffer once more death
 To see those charms enhanced

By rapture into her instilled
 Through love of him, aglow
 With harmony of heart-strings thrilled
 By bliss he would bestow.

She looked upon the rooted swain,
 And then upon her bird,
 And then upon him looked again,
 With animation stirred.

Armillus smiled and her approached,
 And held her out his hand ;
 His welcome to the beauty broached,
 With ardent longing fanned.

She never moved, but stood stock-still,
 In helpless wonderment ;
 To speak or move, she 'd not the will ;
 Her color came and went.

Her lovely eyes were spell-bound fixed
 Upon his earnest own ;
 'There blank amaze' and coyness, mixed,
 In gallant colors shone.

Her dusky bosom 'rose and fell
 Above the fallen robe
 Beneath his wondrous dark eyes' spell ;
 An undulating lobe,

Most fair to see, formed each *contour*
 Of palpitating breast ;
 Each looked so round, so firm, so pure,
 Each in its sweet unrest.

Armillus looked and gazed till he
Recovered sense and speech
By slow return; and soon, too, she
Normality did reach.

He spoke to her: "Thou beauteous child,
What dost thou in this place?
I did not think that 'mong its wild
Precincts so fair a race

Was represented. Art thou she
Who once paid visit there
To far-off isle across the sea,
Thy father's thanks to bear?"

The charming girl seemed re-assured;
She took his outstretched hand,
Of bashfulness and wonder cured;
Armillus stood unmanned

Again, for that so gentle touch
Nigh reached unto the soul;
He never yet had burned so much
Of woman; like a coal

In livid heat his heart was laid
Within a bosom thrilled;
In vain it quiet be he bade;
It would not thus be stilled.

A moment but she looked on him,
And then she fell on knee;
Before him shone the well-formed limb.
"To show thyself to me,

Art thou an angel come on earth?
Thou art so pure and white;
I pray me tell what is thy worth;
Thou art so fair to sight.

Come with me to my father now,
To have him worship thee;
He'll prize thy coming here, I vow;
Then wilt thou follow me?

Carelda will on thee attend,
Prepare thee any dish,
To thy commands in duty bend,
Fulfill thy every wish."

Armillus saw the danger lurk
In granting her request:
He must from such a meeting shirk
At present, nor a guest

Appear unto the aged priest
Who'd call the isle to arms,
And set the savages to feast
Upon him; no alarms

Must he permit the old man e'er
To give, or he was lost;
So he must watch and have a care,
Whatever it might cost.

"I am no angel, maiden sweet,"
He spoke unto the maid,

"I prithee, rise upon thy feet,
Nor be of me afraid.

I am a mortal man, who came
From other clime and sphere;
And see, Armillus is my name;
Thou need'st no harm thee fear.

Adventurous destiny me drove
Upon this sunlit isle,
Me wondrous haps and mishaps wove;
Thou canst securely smile.

I do not mean thy father harm,
Nor thee, thou pretty child;
Then do not take of me alarm;
Cast off that look so wild."

"Thou art no demon, then?" she asked;
My father oft has told
Me of the imps who furious' basked
Below in hell's foul hold."

"Am I a demon to the sight?"
He smiled so winningly,
And looked so true, so frank, so bright,
She could not but agree

With him that such a thought she could
Not entertain 'gainst him
Who came in such a loving mood,
And was so fine of limb.

"No, no, thou look'st not such," she smiled,
"Thou hast so sweet a face;
I am a silly, foolish child."
She spoke with charming grace.

"But then my father prophesied
The downfall of these isles,
That I should be a demon's bride,
Ensnared by hellish wiles,

If once the evil being came
He told me of so oft,
Upon our shores; it were my shame
To not ascend aloft

Into the heaven on high where God
Sits on a golden throne,
And looks down on this wicked sod;
There would I go alone.

In order to avert this fate
For me, and ward the blow,
To keep us from the demon's hate
And his domain below,

My father set this isle apart,
Our God's kind aid to woo,
To touch with prayer his mighty heart;
And therefore this taboo.

My father also often said
This demon would appear
In pleasant shape, my trust to wed,
That I might pause and hear

His honied words unwittingly
Of aught of harm and woe,
That I might all the sooner be
Won over to the foe."

Armillus smiled again; he knew
So well to win in love,
A woman's fond esteem to woo;
In that he was above

All heroes ever planned or born:
He caught her hand once more,
His heart with love and rapture torn,
And trembling to the core.

He let her feel his soft, white skin:
"Do demons feel that way?
Think'st thou I harbor hell within
My body, thee to slay?"

Carelta smiled—that was her name:
Can you of better think
To wed with greatness, love and fame?
With such as his to link?

Her fingers closed upon his hand
With fearless candor, while
She sense of danger from her banned;
She thought no more of guile

In this so handsome, staunch a swain:
She grew so frank and free
He felt as young and fresh again
As e'er he'd ceased to be

On earth before; he had a heart
That bent beneath each shock,
But never broke; it played its part
Again at call; the stock

He came from was a stalwart one;
No other could have braved
The pain and torture he'd through run,
And still at end be saved.

He squeezed her hand within his own,
Her hand so brown and soft;
He would have sacrificed his throne
To have that pleasure oft.

And she: "It feels so fine and nice;
Please squeeze me once again."
Such bliss was his, it had no price;
He was no longer sane.

But suddenly she changed her mood,
And snatched her hand away:
"Thou art so sweet, so fair, so good;
Thou must no longer stay

Upon the isle; my father might
Detect thee, and would call
The warriors o'er yet e'er the night
Could on thy presence fall.

And then it would be up with thee,
And that I could not brook;

I could not on thy misery,
Thy death in torture look.

Whence didst thou come? Where's thy canoe?
But no, that's not the way;
My father might obtain a view
Of thee, for yet 'tis day,

Upon the sea." She stood perplexed,
And knit the gentle brow,
Not knowing what to utter next,
And undecided how

Him to advise. Then suddenly
She came possessed of thought;
She grasped his hand most tenderly,
And thus she him besought:

"Stay here until the fall of night;
Here canst thou safe remain;
Here will nobody seek thy sight
Until thou go'st again.

Here on this spot, some years ago,
My father built this hut
To seek the sunshine's grateful glow
When, most' by clouds in shut,

Athrough the rainy season's time,
It came an hour or two,
As though 'twere guilty of a crime,
Its sins were not too few.

And here my father read his books,
And carved a wooden cross,
Neglected all his other nooks,
And sat there on the moss

And leaves, and carved and read
Until the cross was done;
He went forth with uncovered head,
And placed it in the sun.

But lo, the sun behind a cloud
Quick' fled, as though in fright,
And all the heaven became a shroud
As though it soon was night.

And then it rained, the winds did toss
The torn-off leaves around;
A thunderbolt lit on the cross,
And felled it on the ground.

It lay in splinters on the grass,
The work of weary days;
Since then my father ne'er would pass
Again these fatal ways.

And when I saw thee standing there,
Methought at first thou wert
A demon foul 'stead mortal fair;
Thou dost not feel thee hurt?"

Armillus' face was in a glow
While thus she told her tale;
With whate'er else the maid might know,
She could not him regale

As high' ; it did his spirit good
 To hear this priest's distress ;
 He was in a vindictive mood
 The while ; nor could she guess

That he was happy 'stead of sad,
 Her father's woe to hear ;
 Yet was she most content and glad
 To have him her so near

To prattle to, and fondle too,
 To see and squeeze and kiss,
 His epithets of love to woo :
 It was exquisite bliss.

He threw himself beneath the shade
 Of several mighty trees ;
 Beside him sat the dusky maid,
 Hair waving in the breeze

That fanned delightfully the face
 On this high point from west
 Soft' wafted through the dreamy space
 To where he lay at rest.

At first she touched him on the cheek
 Or shoulder playfully,
 With smiling mien and childish freak ;
 And then, more tenderly,

She swept her hand his bosom o'er,
 And twined about his arm
 Her fingers soft, till to the core
 Her heart took love's alarm.

And then she pressed her ruby lips
 Upon his twitching own ;
 He thrilled unto his fingers' tips ;
 Such joy he 'd seldom known.

And slowly stole his arm about
 The maiden's supple waist,
 Her early coyness put to rout,
 Her bashfulness off chased.

She nestled on his beating heart,
 In contact face and face ;
 Each bore the wound of Cupid's dart ;
 It was a scene of grace,

Of tender love, of simple charm,
 Of passionate affect' ;
 Armillus meant and knew no harm ;
 His honor would protect

This bud of nature in her love ;
 She might lie there and swim
 In drunken bliss, through rapture rove,
 Entwined in every limb,

And yet be pure and undefiled ;
 Might every passion fan ;
 Caretta was a thoughtless child,
 Armillus was a man.

He clasped her in his fond embrace,
 Bliss-stricken to the soul,

Her heart aswell to rapid pace,
 And burning like a coal.

And as he kissed her once again,
 The dove flew down and cooed,
 As if to signify the pain
 It felt that she it wooed

Of feathered mate, was nowhere by .
 Its eyes looked sweet and sad ;
 To see their sorrow, was to cry ;
 It really was too bad.

Armillus was no more of earth ;
 More tender grew his wise :
 What was to this, infernal mirth ?
 He closed his melting eyes,

And clasped her till she sighed with love,
 And clasped him in return ;
 She knew now what oppressed her dove,
 So did she thrill and burn.

Where now was thought of reason's dawn,
 Of doctrine's overthrow,
 Of churches' sneers to spur him on ?
 He had but time to glow

Of her that lay upon his breast,
 And mingled with his own
 Her honied breath ; with loving zest
 Her raven pupils shone.

The sun displayed its purple crown,
 And sank away from view ;
 The shades of night fell softly down
 Upon the isle's taboo.

Sink softly down, spread gently o'er
 The pair, thou peaceful night,
 Thy sable sheet our eyes before,
 And shroud them from our sight.

CANTO IV.

THE PORTENT OF DESTRUCTION.

OH, what a world of strife is this
 For honor, fame and gold,
 Of truth and virtue gone amiss,
 In tales of horror told !

Look on a city proudly piled
 Upon a vast extent
 Of property, to effort riled
 By souls on fortune bent,

So that each man has but the thought
 To scheme and plot for gain,
 Each mind in the delirium caught
 Until it is insane,

To tear from other hands away
 The money which they 'd won,
 To fret athrough the life-long day
 Until that day is done,

And leaves the plotter in a craze,
 To better feelings lost ;
 What if he wins in all this maze ?
 The gain 's not worth the cost.

See what a web of interests clash
 Within a city's bounds,
 Against each other knock and dash
 As, through the feverish rounds

Of business hum and endless care,
 The bitter fight goes on
 Till brains into distraction wear,
 And faces lengthen, wan

And sunken 'neath the constant strain
 Of eager greed for wealth
 Till energy is on the wane,
 And undermined is health.

It is amazing what a world
 Of flashing bubbles rise,
 From out the earnest struggle hurled,
 To charm unwary eyes,

And drag their riches in the flood
 Of speculation wild,
 Of throbbing heart and boiling blood,
 Of virtue lust-defiled.

Vast sums come out, vast sums go in,
 A little grasps each hand
 But throws it forth still more to win,
 By golden prospects fanned.

The business world is but a wheel,
 And each one takes a turn ;
 It goes around in endless reel,
 With endless unconcern

For wasted lives and broken hearts,
 And fortunes made and lost ;
 Each has his day, and plays his parts,
 Upon this ocean tossed.

Enjoy your riches ye who won
 Your pelf by such a strife,
 Bask on in Mammon's golden sun
 Until the end of life ;

Enjoy yourselves while yet ye may,
 If you have time or sense
 For pleasure, ere ye get ye gray,
 And pass forever hence ;

I envy not your regal state,
 Your luxury and flash,
 Your purse-proud ways and boastful prate,
 Your living's pomp and dash ;

You pay too high a price for all
 So lordly you display ;

You have obeyed Fortuna's call,
 And thrown your lives away ;

If you 'd had money from the start,
 'Twould be another thing ;
 You might have kept your youth and heart :
 But these have taken wing,

And you will ne'er again be free
 In mind for soulful thought,
 Aesthetic fancy, harmony
 Into perception wrought.

A verse will pall upon your sight,
 A note upon your ear ;
 Your life will be a sordid night,
 Your lot an anguished tear.

I want no share of gold gained so,
 At such an awful price,
 Thus purchased by my freedom's flow,
 At such a sacrifice.

If life cannot afford to give
 Together wealth and joy,
 Then do I not much care to live
 In luxury, and buoy

My shattered nerves with stimulants
 Up, spend my time in plot
 To save my wealth from fatal chance,
 Or be a glutton's lot

In lap of fashion, hollow ease,
 And false tranquillity ;
 Give me my reason, if you please,
 And give me poverty.

Me leave my heart, me leave my soul,
 Me leave my mind and sense,
 My appetite with bread condole,
 And I not your pretense

Would have for all the flimsy rest
 Contained in all the world ;
 Thus will I surely fare me best,
 My banner proud' unfurled.

Give me my leisure and my song,
 And you may have the wealth,
 But you will have to take along
 Your peace of mind and health

Forever stunned ; I like a toy,
 But will not pay too much
 For what you may esteem a joy,
 But I not count as such.

Armillus never bore a share
 Of all your toil and woe,
 Your insane heat and sapping care,
 Nor proved him wealth a foe

He took it when it came, of course
 But did not spend an hour,
 Or an iota of his force,
 To add it to his power,

He 'd lived a life of mad excess,
 But he 'd enjoyed that life,
 And did not suffer much distress
 Till he for death was rife.

He'd lived another life in glee,
 With wondrous might regaled,
 And did not suffer misery
 Till life once more him failed.

And now he lives a third life out,
 Another fate to carve;
 That he 'll fare well, he does not doubt;
 He surely will not starve.

Nor will the writer of this tale.
 They both will live and love,
 And tranquilly through being sail,
 And never reach above.

Carelta left him when the moon
 Appeared upon the sea:

"I must away, but I will soon
 Return, my love, to thee.

My father will suspect that I
 Have met with something wrong,
 So will I quickly to him hie,
 But I'll not gone be long.

Thou wilt stay here to 'wait me back?'—
 "Aye, that I will, my sweet;
 But do not keep me on the rack
 Until again we meet."

Armillus was alone, to thought
 Most earnest given o'er,
 With mingled care and rapture fraught,
 And stirred unto the core.

"I have not seen my latest breath,"
 He said unto himself,
 "I am not in the face of death;
 I may yet wage for pelf.

Why should I not the rest of life
 Devote unto my weal,
 And take this maiden for my wife,
 Still joy and bliss to feel?

To Vienna or to Paris go?
 I care not what they say;
 Society was e'er my foe,
 And is unto this day.

I am not learned in craft or art
 Or commerce, it is true,
 But I shall know to play my part,
 A fortune to accrue.

I have not been the king of hell
 For nothing, I'll be bound;
 I cannot fail to fare me well;
 I will not run to ground.

The mission here I'll stay to end;
 This sorry trick reveal,

This fellow to perdition send,
 And then his daughter steal.

And then away, for love and life,
 Into another part,
 For other than infernal strife;
 I find I've yet a heart.

Mayhap I'll find some time to teach
 My fellow man where he
 Stays out of common-sense's reach,
 And bows to trickery."

He wiped his hot, perspiring brow,
 And stepped out on the ledge,
 And registered a solemn vow,
 There on the rocky edge,

He'd take Carelta for his own,
 And love her till the end;
 The moon upon the lover shone:
 In her, he had a friend.

For that pale orb is linked with love
 As wine is linked with song,
 As cooing 's sonant with the dove,
 And shame is bound with wrong.

He stood in thought, and breathed in
 The fragrant midnight air;
 His heart him burned his breast within
 At thought of her so fair

Who'd won his heart at sight, and who
 Loved fondly in return;
 He could not aught her acts construe,
 Else from her manner learn.

And as he stood there in the night
 Beneath the starlit sky,
 Full flooded with fair Luna's light,
 There came a far-off cry;

And with it came a rumbling sound
 With ominous portent;
 About him shook the rocky ground,
 And waters came and went

With fiercer zest upon the strand
 Below; some trees down crashed;
 There ran a tremor through the land;
 And through the forest dashed

The startled animals in haste;
 The birds flew screaming by,
 All by the self-same terror chased
 Which none chose to defy.

But only for a moment all;
 Then was it still again,
 Except there was another call,
 As though in grief or pain.

Armillus knew the voice, and ran
 To where the voice he 'd heard,
 And sped three paces at a span,
 Nor stopped to give a word

In answer till he reached the spot ;
 And there Carelta lay
 Upon the ground beneath a lot
 Of boughs and lumps of clay

That had been shaken from above
 Into the vale below
 Upon his pale and startled love,
 There crying in her woe.

He dragged her out, and caught her in
 His eager, anxious arms ;
 She was not hurt ; he sought to win
 Her back from her alarms.

But she would not be calm nor still,
 Nor listen to his voice,
 And struggled 'gainst him with all will,
 His soothing to rehearse.

" Oh fly from off this fatal isle,"
 She cried, " ere 'tis destroyed ;
 We have no time for kiss or smile ;
 My love and dreams are void."

Armillus strained the girl to heart :
 " Why should I fly alone ?
 I do not mean that we shall part.
 Then do not cry and moan.

I will not give thee up, I vow,
 But make thee to my wife ;
 Then do not, sweetheart, tremble now,
 While there is hope and life.

It was an earthquake, nothing more ;
 There's nothing wrong with me ;
 I will not cease thee to adore ;
 Why wilt no more love me ?"

Carelta nestled to him close ;
 " Be thou the Evil One,
 I will endure the hellish dose,
 And be fore'er undone,
 So I remain with thee ; thou art
 My being's soul and life,
 So hast thou won my yielding heart ;
 And I will be thy wife,

Whatever that may mean or say ;
 I give myself to thee,
 And follow thee upon thy way
 Wherever that may be.

The prophecy has been fulfilled :
 I am the bride of hell !"
 Armillus to the marrow thrilled :
 " Love, thou hast chosen well !

But thou art wrong ; no demon is
 The man whom so dost love ;
 My heart not seethes with hellish fizz,
 Nor light from heaven above.

I am a mortal like thyself,
 Who loves thee, and is thine ;

Then see in me no knavish elf
 Who'll make thee to repine,

I love thee, maid, as though I knew
 Thee since I was a boy,
 And will unto my troth be true,
 And make thy life a joy."

Carelta looked into his eyes,
 And saw he spoke the truth ;
 So ceased her heart's despairing cries,
 And saw in him the youth

Who gives his heart and soul to her
 He has elected of
 The gentle sex, as if she were
 The acme of man's love.

" But then," she asked, " what may it mean
 That we are ruin nigh ?
 We felt so safe of grace yestreen,
 And now we all must die."—

" But wherefore ? I no reason see
 Why thou shouldst have such fears ;
 All nature rests in harmony ;
 Then dry these foolish tears."—

" Thou dost not understand that fate
 Is pitted 'gainst our hope ;
 A dreadful death must us await,
 'Gainst which we cannot cope.

On yonder mountain was a lake
 Of which my father said
 That if it dry, then we should make
 Our peace, ere we are dead,

With heaven. The lake was there to-day ;
 My father on the ground
 Before it knelt, his prayers to say ;
 'Twas there that him I found.

He greeted me with gentle kiss ;
 I knelt down at his side,
 When suddenly there was a hiss :
 The waters went and dried.

It seemed as though the earth beneath
 Had drunk' the water in ;
 I saw my father set his teeth,
 The color leave his skin.

" There is an evil sprite abroad,"
 I heard him say, " and we
 Are from our godhead's grace outlawed ;
 Already death I see

Stare both of us into the face."
 I ran from him in fright
 To seek thee at our trysting place,
 To haste within thy sight.

For there alone I feel secure.
 I would this island flee,
 And so escape destruction sure,
 But cannot go with thee

Without my father; I could not
Desert him in this strait,
Deliver him unto his lot,
And leave him to his fate.

And yet I cannot have thee meet
His angry eye, for he
Would thee as mortal foe-man greet,
And that I cannot see.

I love thee much, but love him too,
And must his goodness bless;
Oh tell me, then, what I shall do;
I am in sore distress."

Armillus smiled, and kissed the maid,
And caught her by the hand:
"Cheer up, my love; be not afraid;
Thy grief I understand.

Come take me to thy father now,
And let me to him speak;
He will not do me harm, I vow;
I'm strong, and he is weak.

He knows a demon from a man,
And he will quell thy fears,
Thy gloomy lamentations ban,
And dry thee, love, thy tears."

She hesitated——and was lost,
And led him from the spot,
With manifold emotion tossed
Her bosom, burning hot.

She led him up a steep ascent
Athrough the silent night;
And thoughtfully her after went
Armillus, with the light

Of moon refulgent on his brow
In earnest calmness set;
He was again the hero now
We first in hell him met.

They reached the summit of the steep,
And there, upon a rock,
As wizard in some awful keep,
The sense of man to mock,

An aged, bowed-down figure crouched,
In long, loose garment clad,
A sight that for great suffering vouched,
So pitiful and sad.

The hair was snowy white, and fell
In clotted masses down
Upon his shoulders bare, to tell
A tale of woe; his gown

Was tattered, threadbare, old and torn,
And covered scantily
The thin, gaunt frame, so lean and worn;
His hands shook nervously.

But in his eyes there flashed a light
That made Armillus start,

And caused Carelta to affright,
So piercing was their dart.

He turned about, and fixed them on
The wonder-stricken twain
Held spell-bound by that visage wan;
They saw he was insane.

He started up; Carelta fell
Upon her knees, and bowed
Her head as to avert the spell;
So was she thrall'd and cowed.

Armillus, with unshaken mien,
Approached the hoary priest,
Carelta and the same between,
His splendid forehead creased

With furrow deep; the sire fell back,
And crossed upon his breast
With hands; his brow was black
With rage and fierce unrest;

"Avaunt, thou demon! Hence, say I!"
He cried; Armillus fixed
Upon the priest a glittering eye
Where strength and sternness, mixed,

Exultant shone. The old man quaked
As if in deadly fear:

"O God Almighty, have I waked
In vain these years through here

To do Thy will, Thy foes withstand,
To teach Thy holy word,
To preach Thy glory on this land?
And are my prayers unheard?

This demon shrinks not at the sign
Of holy cross, defies
My adjuration, gospel Thine,
With brimstone-flashing eyes."

Armillus oped his lips and spoke:
"Most reverend, holy sir:
In vain you aid from heaven invoke;
In what you think, you err.

I am a mortal man like you,
By chance thrown on this isle,
And come in peace your grace to sue,
To meet, 'stead frown, a smile.

Your daughter will confirm my word;
She has received me well:
She thinks that it would be absurd
To think me come from hell,

A demon, to destroy this land;
But I have power and might,
And can avert the woe at hand
You so prophetic sight.

If you will tell me how you came
To occupy this place,
Your origin and home and name;
And if it was disgrace,

Misfortune, loss of wealth or kin,
Or freak that drove you hence,
I may assuage the fear within
Your bosom ; no pretense

Lay I to heavenly aid ; I come
To you as fellow man,
To sympathize with you, and from
My heart, as best I can.

Then answer me." The old man looked
With wonder on the swain ;
Intently were his glances hooked
Upon him ; but again

He fell a pace in rear, distrust
Full standing on his face.
" You are ungenerous, unjust ;
I come to woo your grace,"

Armillus spoke again. Yet still
The sire not moved a hand
To show the stranger better will,
Or alter his command.

Armillus waited for reply,
And then began once more :
" Your silence how construe must I ?
How long must I implore

That you will speak ? What may this mean ?
Am I so dread to sight,
That you are dumb ? Not that, I ween.
Then let me set you right."

The old man stared upon the youth,
And then upon the place
Where, if the maid had spoke' the truth,
A lake had left its trace ;

And as he looked upon the spot,
A quiver through him ran :
" This is some foul, infernal plot ;
Avaunt, thou art no man !

Thou art a demon, come to win
With honied words my soul ;
But I will not be won by sin ;
I seek the heavenly goal.

Carelta, hasten to my side ;
This handsome youth 's a snare :
Thou shalt not be the devil's bride,
Damnation be thy share."

And as he cried the words, he made
A mien as though to snatch
His daughter's arm ; Armillus bade
Him halt : " I am your match

In strength and in agility ;
Stand back, or I will hurl
You down this mount into the sea,
So do not touch the girl.

I doubt me much if she was born
Of you, or you would ne'er

Have her from home and country torn,
This wilderness to share

With you and savage tribes ; and now,
I'll know the truth, or I
Will wring it off your tongue, I vow ;
That, dare me not to try."

The old man shook, and wrung his hands
As if in wild despair ;
He ceased to issue vain commands,
And wept, and tore his hair :

" O, am I then forsook of grace ?
Is this my punishment
For what I've done ? And is my race
So nearly run and spent,

Ere I am sure of mercy, ere
I've made my peace with God ?
And is this demon sent to bear
My soul from hence ? This sod

To be my final resting place ?
The chastisement is dire ;
I ne'er shall see Jehovah's face ;
I'm doomed to hell and fire !"

Armillus touched him on the arm,
His features lit up stern' :
" Too justified is your alarm ;
All sinners have their turn.

Aye, I am come to take thy soul
Away upon this night ;
You have approached your living's goal,
To end in woe and fright.

You have but time to see if you
Cannot yet win God's heart,
By earnest prayer His favor woo
Ere you this life depart.

Confess your sin aloud to Him,
And He may you absolve,
And save you from our horrors' brim ;
The sentence may revolve

Unto your good." The old man fell
Upon his knees, and turned
His orbs on high, beneath the spell ;
His face excited' burned

With high-strung fear. Armillus stood
Like marble statue there.
Carelta, in affrighted mood,
To look up did not dare.

The moon shone down upon the scene
With a malicious smile ;
And then a dark cloud came between
Its visage and the isle.

CANTO V.

THE DOCTRINE OF HELL.

SEE how religion turns the brain,
And twines its serpent fold
About it till it is insane,
And to perdition sold,

To misery, delusion's sway,
Hypocrisy and cant,
To superstition, cruel fray,
Unreason, arrant rant.

Mark how the intellect is wrapped
In folly and in night,
The heart of its emotions sapped,
The soul of glorious sight.

Note how the sympathies are run
Into a piteous groove,
To error and distraction won,
My premises to prove.

Learn how the morals are debased,
The hand is led to crime,
The beauty of man's thought defaced,
So dragged through doctrine's slime.

Look to what ends the means have come
To make a joy this life,
The prospect bleak, the feelings numb,
The sentiments at strife.

The wretched sire cried bitter tears,
And called on God on high,
Spurred on by most distressing fears
To save his soul to try :

" Long years ago, while still a youth
Beneath my father's care,
O God, the heavenly, blessed truth
Fell to my boyish share.

I lived in all humility
Of Thee, and Thy commands ;
I cast off human vanity,
And gave into Thy hands

My heart and soul. My father died,
And blessed me, and I turned
My mind on matters sanctified,
And all temptation spurned.

My brother was a godless man
Who cursed Thee to Thy face,
Long placed beneath the social ban
To fill an outcast's place.

He lived within a home he'd built
From out of earnings won
In sordid strife and greedy guilt,
Where ne'er was homage done

Unto Thy mercy ; I in vain
Have sought to win him o'er ;

Was oft rebuffed, and did again
Not cease to him implore

To seek Thy grace ere 'twas too late
Then did he swear and foam,
And did me with abuse berate,
And chased me from his home

Yet still I vowed that I'd stay by,
And save him from his doom,
However he might seek and try
To thwart me. Then the womb

Of her he'd taken for his wife,
A daughter him did bear ;
And I approached the puny life
To save it from the snare

Of godless teaching ; and again
He drove me from his door ;
My protestations were in vain ;
I vowed I'd stand no more

This sinning by, but snatch the child
From out his monstrous arms
Where it was sure to be defiled,
And shield it from his harms.

And this I did. In dead of night,
Into his house I stole,
And robbed his daughter from his sight
In grief that home to roll.

I never thought that what I did
Would be so dread, or I
Would ne'er him of his child have rid,
But first prepared to die.

It was a sorry, wicked deed
Which I did oft me rue ;
Yet did I not expect this meed,
This so exacting due.

If thou art sent from Satan's hold
To take my soul along
With thee, I must my arms still fold,
And think of that great wrong.

But what I did, was done for good ;
I thought forgiveness
Would be extended me, God's mood
Yet give me happiness.

The mother died of grief and shame,
My brother bowed his head,
And left his homestead and his fame ;
And in a year was dead.

He sought for me through many lands,
But I was hid away
Upon this isle, nor could his hands
Here find me, me to slay.

I took a refuge on a ship
For far New Zealand bound,
To flee my brother's wrathful grip,
And seek upon that ground

A missionary's home and place ;
The ship encountered gales
On gales, was led a chase
Until were gone its sails,

And everywhere it sprung a leak ;
Then came the final wave
God's vengeance on my crime to wreak,
But I escaped the grave,

As did the child ; we gained the shore
Of yonder far-off isle,
And since then did I God implore
Once more on me to smile.

I thought Thou hadst my prayer heard,
Almighty Jove, but now
I see Thou turnedst from my word
E'en though I weep and bow.

I pray Thou wilt forgive my crime ;
I have it sore' atoned ;
And here, in this sequestered clime,
Have weary years I groaned

In misery, repentance, woe ;
Oh, do not cast me out,
But let me feel Thy mercy's glow
Which I did never doubt.

I dread my brother there to meet
Below in horrid hell,
As, wrapped in tears and fiery sheet,
Our souls with pain shall swell.

I can't believe that I am damned ;
My crime was great, 'tis true ;
But I have ne'er repentance shammed ;
Sincerely do I woo

Thy grace, O God." He started up
From off his knees, and shot
A fiery glance ; 'twas full, his cup
Of anguish, sad his lot.

" Oh tell me not thou art from hell,"
Unto the youth he cried.
" You piteous fool, you know it well,"
Armillus him replied.

" This punishment you have deserved,
But she forgives you ; see,
She ne'er has from your teachings swerved ;
She loves you faithfully."

And willingly Carelta 'rose,
And threw herself into
The old man's arms, which 'round her froze ;
His troubles were not few.

Armillus then the sire addressed :
" You have not long to live,
And have so long your mind distressed
With folly, that I give

You no more happiness on earth ;
But if there's heaven above,

Then shall you rise into its birth,
And claim its rosate love.

I will not rob your heart the hope,
That you may once reach there ;
'Twere vain, with senseless faith to cope ;
And you'd no better fare.

You are extinct for love and life,
But this your niece will learn,
When she is once my loving wife,
Her mind from that to turn

Which is not built on reason's crest,
Not rests on aught than creed,
Not stands of common sense confessed,
Not from delusion freed.

You must be blind to think that I
A demon am, and come
To lend a face to that foul lie
Which is embraced in sum

In that rank faith which teaches you
Th' existence of a hell
Which should be then our final due
If we had done not well.

If there's a God on high, and he
Is merciful and great,
A hell, as you think, ne'er could be,
To nourish godly hate

'Gainst puny man, his soul condemn
To endless fire and pain,
God watch his ills with cruel phlegm,
And on him brimstone rain.

If there is such a hell below
The surface of the earth
As you've there placed for human woe,
Unto a Satan's mirth,

Then is there not a God on high
All-merciful and just,
His faithful creatures so to try
When they've returned to dust.

A man can ne'er commit a sin
That is so foul and dire
That he should burn in hell within,
In an eternal fire :

For man is not to be so held
For any act or deed
That he should be with torture swelled
Throughout all time. The creed

Which teaches that, is brutal, wrong,
Built on revenge and hate ;
It cannot be the theme of song
Of praise ; there's no such state.

The man who will implant the fear
Of hell into a child,
Alone is to that kingdom near,
Inferno 'mong us styled.

It may be well to hold that sword
Still o'er the rabble's head,
That order may be sovereign lord ;
But I would erst they fed

The people with another kind
Of teaching : science, art ;
They educated them to find
Than God's, another heart.

If once a man has gone as far
As to be free from thought
Which tends his reason so to mar,
He can be eas'ly brought

To see the motive which possessed
Our ancestors to think
That there is such a realm distressed
As hell, from which we shrink.

But how the world at large can hold
To such a shameful creed,
Is more than can in sense be told ;
'Tis wonderful indeed.

And there are thousands who consign
In thought a man to hell
As only punishment condign,
As though they meant it well

With him ; I would that they
Were 'mong the tortured elves ;
Then, when they burn through night and day,
They'd know it for themselves

What fun it was to live fore'er
In sulphur and in fire ;
They 'd wish they'd never had a share
In crediting so dire

A perfidy ; let those who think
That there is such a place,
Be blessed by it, but let me shrink
From such a brutal race

Of men who rate their fellows so
That they believe that one
In all the world deserves to go
To hell, and be undone.

The doctrine's false, the doctrine's wrong,
The doctrine is a snare ;
It will not live to sully long
The intellect, and bear

Its fruit in folly, ignorance,
Stupidity and shame,
But will from reason's shield off glance,
Forever robbed of fame.

The time is past when faith and creed
Together rule the world,
And plant in hearts their poisoned seed ;
Their banners now are furled,

And laid away in dusty past,
Besmeared with many a blot,

In ignominious silence cast,
And given o'er to rot.

Some few still hang on as of old,
But these will soon drop off,
And cling to quite another hold
Not sanctified with scoff,

Derision from the scientist,
The thinker and the sage,
Who 'gainst it common sense enlist,
And ban it from the age.

And now I bid you come with me,
Return once more to life ;
I will your friend and brother be ;
Your niece shall be my wife.

You have repented of your crime ;
Repent of folly too,
As you have taught in this far clime,
'The warriors' grace to woo."

The aged man, with tears in eye,
Held out his skinny hand,
The moon broke out upon the sky
Effulgent o'er the land.

The trio shaped its footsteps to
The murmuring sea below,
And placed itself in a canoe
From thence fore'er to go.

Armillus took the oars, and plied
Them with his sturdy arms
Until the isle from vision died
Into the night-mists' charms.

And so the portent of the fall
Of faith upon the isle
E'en was fulfilled ; freed from that thrall,
It might in splendor smile

For centuries upon the sea,
The green float on the blue,
A gem, nor fated long to be
The cannibal's taboo.

The morning broke in purple sheens
Upon the swelling wave,
And spread its lustre o'er the scenes
Which me my topic gave.

A few short hours, and then they struck
Upon the other shore
Where all had had the self-same luck
To be received before

They met ; as grated on the sand
The boat, the warriors stood
In wonder at the three at hand
In unity, nor could

They understand what all this meant,
Or what might be inferred,
But all had the presentiment
That something had occurred

That would affect th' entire race ;
 And Loti caught the line
 Armillus threw with smiling face
 Unto him, with a sign

To aid Carelta from her seat ;
 And when the three were out,
 With curiosity there beat
 Each heart, while joyous shout

Arose from hundred eager lips '
 Assembled there around,
 Here balancing upon the tips
 Of toes, there on the ground

In comfort stretched the old man stepped
 Into the fluttering mid ;
 But as they all upon him leapt,
 He them stand off him bid :

" I come not here to be received
 Your priest, as you of yore
 Have me within your hearts believed,
 And thus did me adore ;

I come to say that what I've taught
 Before I left, will I,
 Because it was in error wrought,
 Recall before I die.

This stranger here has shown to me
 The folly of my creed,
 And so I shall in future be
 Your tutor, you to lead

Into another sphere of life
 As appertains your prayer,
 So that you may for reason rife
 Be in due reason, e'er

I shall betake me from the scene,
 And be forever mute ;
 I would not leave this isle so green
 E'er I did me refute

The doctrine I have in this place
 Expounded, ere I went
 From hence, unto your kindly race,
 And years in thinking spent

On subjects I must now announce
 As in another light
 Than that which did my reason flounce
 When first I met your sight.

The angel whom I once to you
 Have sent, my thanks to bear,
 Now standing blushing in view,
 No more will with me share

My hermitage on yonder shore,
 But will Armillus wed,
 This stranger whom you'll see no more
 He'll occupy my stead

Of sweet protectorship to her ;
 I freely give her up,

And do not think that much I err
 To let her share his cup.

The prophecy is not fulfilled ;
 That island there is safe ;
 We will not be in anger killed
 By any God, and chafe

Eternally in hell for sins
 We have committed here,
 To be tormented by the grins
 Of goblins, live in fear

Of frightful tortures ever fresh
 To give us constant pain,
 To burn into our wincing flesh
 Until we are insane.

I thank you for the favors shown
 To me and to this pair,
 And will for errors past atone
 By teaching you to bear

Another creed, the dawning light
 Of this our century,
 To pall the other in our sight,
 Our banner fair to see."

And as he spoke, a swelling sail
 Was seen upon the sea,
 Our hero in his heart cried hail ;
 Now was he soon to be

Among his fellow men once more,
 In cities proud and great,
 Where he would settle to adore
 His wife, his new'-won mate.

He caused a fire at once to be
 There lit upon the sand,
 The pilot on that ship might see,
 And bear him from this land.

And lo, the swelling sail grew bright
 Each moment more and more,
 A gallant ship hove into sight
 Of that excited shore.

And see, a puff of snow-white smoke
 Came whirling out its side,
 An answering sign which them bespoke
 They would not long abide

Upon the isle. Armillus grasped
 Carelta by the hand,
 Her supple waist most gently clasped,
 To help her off the sand

Once more into the frail canoe
 Where they together sat
 Within the cheering warriors' view.
 The aged theocrat

With loving mien upon them gazed,
 With hand upon his heart ;
 His sunken eyes with feeling glazed
 To see them thus depart.

Armillus cried : " Why stand you there ?
Come follow us to meet
The flying ship, our voyage share,
And other climates greet.

The old man sadly shook his head :
" I will not go with thee ;
Go thou with her whom thou wilt wed
Alone across the sea.

I have determined here to stay
Until the end of life ;
It cometh nigh, the final day,
The settlement of strife.

I bless thee with all heart and soul ;
Thou art a noble youth ;
Thou hast in splendor yet to roll,
And to proclaim the truth

Unto the world in reference to
The creed it rates so high ;
Then go, thy fortune's smile to woo,
And leave me here to die.

I've lived my life, and would not see
That busy world again
Where I have wrought such misery,
And have my brother slain.

In this so beautiful abode,
Will I my days conclude,
To teach this race the reason's code
With which thou art imbued.

And she that lived with me so long,
May she thy help-mate be ;
I taught her nothing but was wrong ;
I freely give her thee.

Farewell to thee, farewell to her,
Farewell unto you both ;
Go out thy mission to aver,
And consummate your troth."

The old man turned upon his heel,
And knelt upon the ground ;
There was no heart that did not feel
His woe ; and all around,

The eyes were misty, lips were mute,
And souls excessive' touched ;
No smiling face betrayed a brute ;
The chief the sire's hand clutched,

And spoke a word of sympathy ;
And still the ship hove nigh ;
Carelta wept : and feelingly,
Armillus heaved a sigh.

And then he grasped the ashen oar ;
The boat shot swift' into
The waves from off the yielding shore
Away out from their view.

Armillus, with his heart so full
It nearly burst, stopped short

In effort, ceased to pull ;
And this the warriors caught :

" Farewell, thou hospitable race,
That welcomed in thy mid
That aged man with stricken face,
And her who will be hid

Forever from your sight, to learn
What else the world contains,
How other interests clash and turn,
What curious' wrought refrains

Are heard in other lands than this,
Where men are black and white,
Or bask in sere Mongolian bliss,
An orange to the sight.

I thank thee for thy goodly fare,
And, too, that through my fate
Your isles among, fell to my share
So dearly loved a mate.

I leave you, men, and wives, and boys
And girls, to listen to
Your priest to tell of other joys
Than frivolous taboo.

I cannot place a better price
Upon what you did me
Than rob you of your paradise,
And leave you surety

Of common sense, harmonious thought,
Philosophy in glow
Of reason's light in beauty wrought :
'Tis all I can bestow.

But that is much, for all the world
Will leap to grasp the gift
When faith shall be from altars hurled,
And it the truth shall sift

From error and from monstrous creed ;
Then not ungrateful think
My seeming' small and niggard' meed,
Nor from my offering shrink.

I'll hold in grateful memory
The days I passed with you,
And shall not cease me thankfully
To keep you in my view

Where'er I go, where'er I speak,
Whatever be my lot :
My heart will always stray to seek
Again this hallowed spot.

And you, revered and honored sir,
Whom, too, I leave behind,
Who gives so freely to me her
To whom so good and kind

You've tried to be through all these years :
I leave you with a pang ;
Carelta leaves with many tears,
With not a hope to hang

On ever seeing you again ;
 You have a hero's heart ;
 Yours is a strangely sturdy brain,
 To leave us thus to part

From you who stays in poverty
 And age 'midst foreign folk,
 While we are seeking luxury ;
 With deep regret I choke.

You have atoned for what you've done ;
 I leave you conscience-free ;
 You have the crown of glory won
 Which full hearts cheerfully

Accord to one who is so great ;
 May you in honor dwell
 E'en in this rude and simple state ;
 I bid you all farewell.

Armillus leaves, to die once more
 Out in this curious world,
 Upon some far-off, unknown shore
 Perchance in error hurled,

Which he must set out to reform,
 And lead unto the right,
 Sweep off their doctrine's filth in storm,
 And introduce the light

Of reason in their piteous state,
 And break the priestly spell,
 Armillus feels him wondrous' great :
 He bids you all farewell."

Once more he plied the supple oar ;
 He had no more to tell :
 There floated back unto the shore
 His last " Farewell !"—" Farewell !"

They saw him reach the ship, and then
 Another cloud of smoke .
 Was seen ; how cheered those savage men ;
 They knew Armillus spoke

His final greeting. In the mist
 Out on the bright, blue sea,
 To sight the sail was soon dismissed ;
 There must dismiss it we.

—:0:—

CANTO VI.

THE RETURN TO NOTHING.

YOU little know, O reader dear,
 What deep emotions fill
 My heart, as now the end I near,
 What sentiments me thrill.

For years I've dreamt these verses out ;
 Through many nights and days

Have I pursued my inky route,
 My fancy in a maze.

And now my work will soon be done,
 This labor of the past,
 The recompense of patience won ;
 Here am I at the last

Refrain, the canto which will close
 Upon the troubled scenes
 I have portrayed, oft acrimose',
 Oft merrily, the means

Of many an hour of pleasure, of
 Sincere and heartfelt joy,
 But troublesome as is the love
 Of some pale love-sick boy.

I thank my friends who watched me through
 This long, exciting work,
 And had with me the end in view ;
 They never saw me shrink

The prospects on the plodding 'twould
 For months on me entail ;
 And now my purpose I've made good ;
 It is too late to fail.

I've had these verses on my tongue
 So often, I'm afraid
 I'll disappoint the many 'mong
 My friends whom oft I made

The victims of my poet's pride,
 And told about this verse ;
 I fear I've gone the mark too wide,
 And they a fool will curse

Me for my groundless vanity ;
 Howe'er, I've done my best,
 And pride me that Christianity
 Will hate me ; and the rest,

I trust, will not be too severe
 Upon my clumsy art ;
 That would be paying rather dear
 For years of toil ; my part

Has always been an honest one ;
 I crave no genius' meed
 For what has off my pen here run ;
 I care but to succeed

In the impression of my theme
 Upon an idle world ;
 If this should prove a futile dream,
 Then be oblivion furled

About my verse ; the days I lost
 In putting forth this rhyme,
 Might have me somewhat dearer cost ;
 It was well spent, my time.

Perhaps I've failed in that I've been
 Familiar in my tone
 With whom me scan ; that were a sin
 I would not bear alone,

Since august authors left their thread
 To chat an off-hand word
 With those who have their fictions read,
 Nor critics have demurred.

A writer in unmeasured prose
 Can well his way pursue
 In rigid lines and even flows,
 But that can seldom do

The poet who from out the heart
 Drafts topics, and the tongue
 In which he clads them; fancy's dart
 Is not from bow-string sprung

Of straight-laced tenure; he not guides
 The pen that flies from line
 To line, but follows it, and bides,
 As does the frost the vine,

His time to master it again;
 He does that when 'tis done
 And is at end, th' inspired strain;
 Then is the battle won.

But while the strain goes on, he writes
 What him the heart dictates
 In often most eccentric flights,
 Nor for an order waits

From his disgusted, outraged mind
 To here expand th' idea,
 And there it into form to bind,
 To mesh with order's gear.

And here I find myself once more
 From topic run away,
 To please th' impulsive heart, and soar
 Into the maze astray

Of meaningless and idle cant,
 As thinks the sober sense
 Of unloved mind, which bids me chant
 My song without defence.

Alas, I feel as though this last
 Of cantos is too small
 To hold what I would glad' have classed
 Within its narrow thrall;

I feel as though I might expand
 It till th' entire rest
 Were less than it, to take its stand
 As mightiest confessed

Of my most heartfelt thoughts and ways,
 Yet must I cut it short,
 And tell the rest wrapped 'round with stays,
 In curtailed parlance caught.

It ought to be the best of all,
 Much better than the first,
 And 'neath no reader's censure fall;
 I fear 'twill be the worst.

For then my weary pen was fresh,
 And not as now, so fagged

It will no more with spirit mesh
 Into my theme; it lagged

When I began the final strain;
 I hope it will revive,
 And live to effort up again;
 With animation strive

To make the close a worthy one
 To all this lengthy work;
 Then may it be fore'er undone;
 Till then, it must not shirk.

Armillus might have found a pen
 'That would have better writ'
 His history for eager men
 To swallow; sorry wit

Have I displayed in my account;
 Yet must he me forgive,
 For I have striven hard to flout
 His banner, that to live

Eternally this verse may be
 Yet fated, and thus save
 His name from the ignominy
 Of unsung hero's grave.

I much suspect that well he fared
 Since last I saw him, when
 He with his love the farewell shared
 Accorded him by men

Of savage ilk, but who bestowed
 Most freely what they felt,
 When he in sorrow, from them vowed,
 Their every heart to melt.

For ere full many years had passed,
 I heard some curious tales
 From Paris brilliant, gay and fast;
 My shrewdness seldom fails

To recognize what me concerns;
 The tales attracted my
 Attention, e'en through struggles' turns,
 When first they met my eye.

I will relate what I have heard
 As though I had been there,
 But cannot vouch for every word
 That falls into your share.

There came one day in pompous style
 Unto a grand hotel
 An equipage, with *chasseurs'* file
 Its elegance to swell,

And on the register was placed
 A princely sounding name,
 To no immediate family traced,
 But not devoid of fame.

The man who bore that name was young
 And handsome as a god,
 From surely noble lineage sprung,
 But from a foreign sod.

And with him came a wife and child,
The latter with its nurse
From Switzerland; the tongues went wild
In Paris, to rehearse

The wealth and splendor of their train,
The beauty of the pair,
Patrician mien and high disdain
They with them 'round did bear.

The wife but few had caught a glance
Of, but these few soon spread
Descriptions of her looks that chance
Had shown them, and they said

Her face was of a dusky hue,
But beautiful and sweet,
And so entrancing to the view,
To see it was a treat.

Some curious parties went to see
What meant this great *furor*,
And chased to the authority
Who looked the matter o'er,

And told them how the noble house
From which the stranger sprang,
Had been the victim of a chouse
With which the country rang.

The only scion of the tree
Of family might, a boy,
Had been abducted knavishly,
With sorrow to alloy

His parents' pride in him, by one
Who had some dark design
To see the little heir undone,
And follow in the line

Of heritage; the knave was caught,
But he had not the child;
He had it to the Indians brought
To bring it up there wild

Because he had the courage not
To stab the babe to heart;
And so he left it to its lot,
To play some homely part

In other spheres; he lost the track
Of him he had so wronged;
And they the clew to find him lacked,
To whom the boy belonged.

The fellow suffered for his crime,
But brought not back the boy;
The parents' wound healed up in time,
But never new a joy

Again in life, and passed away,
And left their wealth behind,
The only heir far off astray;
And him no one could find.

The boy, deserted thus when still
A babe, was taken up

By gypsies, much against its will;
Most bitter was its cup.

In early boyhood he escaped
Through some display of pluck;
And then his destiny him shaped
A better streak of luck.

A nabob took the handsome lad,
Attached him to his home,
And died; the boy was very sad,
But needed not to roam

Astray again; because the old
Philanthropist him left
A fortune; and the heir now rolled,
Of further care bereft,

In luxury, and lived a life
Of ease and revelry,
By nature for the vicious rife;
He floated in a sea

Of high extremes, until, one day,
His friends him missed; he fell
In duel with one wronged, they say;
But they could never tell

If he was dead, or still alive,
Nor did they o'ermuch care,
As long as they were left to thrive,
How did the lost one fare.

And now he came with wife and child
Once more unto the sod
Where he was now patrician styled,
Escaped from misery's rod.

They knew him by a mole he had
Upon his shoulder blade;
You may believe the man was glad
To be an heir thus made.

So far his antecedents run;
But that's the least I heard;
There is the interest but begun:
The rest may sound absurd,

But is no less the truth; our peer
Had peculiarities;
The folks were pleased to call him queer,
And were not slow to seize

The facts, to noise his fame about;
It seemed he was inclined
To be a monomaniac, flout
Eccentric ways of mind

Into the public eye and ear;
When a procession passed
Of churchly phase, then he would sneer,
And in a rage be cast.

He would not bow, nor would he doff
His hat unto the priest,
But met his sanctity with scoff,
To say the very least.

And when he passed a church, his brow
Contracted to a frown,
As if he registered a vow
To hew the building down.

Where'er he met with fast or prayer,
His lurid eye would flash;
The sight of cross he could not bear;
All over he would dash

The sight of whate'er faith concerned
Away, and speak a curse;
His olive cheeks with anger burned
Where'er he caught a verse

That praised the Virgin; once he e'en
Harangued a motley crowd,
And vented in harsh tongue his spleen
'Gainst faith, both fierce' and loud'.

He sent a book against the church,
And damned it up and down,
And left forbearance in the lurch;
He earned a great renown

As preacher 'gainst the orthodox
Religions, Catholic
And Protestant; with crushing knocks
Assailed them, fast and thick.

He was too great a peer to be
Molested by police;
They let him preach his heresy,
And gave our hero lease

To say and do what best him pleased,
And so he preached and wrote,
His heart of its resentment eased,
And cowl and cossack smote.

The people was astounded by
His wondrous eloquence
Which he employed its faith to try,
His learning, common sense.

And many won he to him o'er
Their creed to leave behind,
To study scientific lore
And be no longer blind.

'Tis true, the church was much incensed
But could not do him aught,
Or of his presence there be cleansed;
He was not to be caught

With excommunication, but
Laughed all their anger down,
Upon their anathemas shut
With rare derision; town

And country were inflamed by all
He hurled against the cross;
He exercised a weighty thrall,
And won from out their dross

Full many thousands of the herd
That had before adored

The faith; some said he was absurd,
But could not shake him, stored

In intellect as this man then
Appeared before the world,
A master-mind before all men,
In iron tenets furl'd,

That could not be gainsayed; he won
The day; the atheists grew
In number with each dawning sun;
Who stayed behind, were few.

When he had spent some years in so
His doctrines spreading 'round
In France, and routed had his foe,
Across his way he found

To England, there to carry strife
And war against the creed,
And struggle 'gainst it to the knife,
Obtain for reason need.

That hot-bed of fanatic thought
Received the preacher well,
Against his expectations; fought
Their way to hear him tell

Then how they were mistaken in
Their dogma and belief,
How they had e'er in error been,
These Britons; gave them leave

To roundly them abuse, and hurl
His shafts against the cross—
Britannian is a fickle girl;
Armillus won the toss.

The ministry arose in arms
Against the anti-Christ,
And tried to work him untold harms,
Their wits too highly priced.

They and a faithful few might rave,
And fall upon their knees,
In Christian mind, his soul to save;
He told them they should please

Not trouble him: he feared not hell,
For he had once been king
Of those same realms on other shell,
And heard the angels sing.

They thought the man was mad, but he
Went on to preach his word
Against their sad Christianity,
And all Britannian heard,

And was amazed; the faith was wrecked,
The church was in alarm,
And might no more stand up erect;
There was no succoring arm

To rescue it from final doom;
They'd had, like dog, their day,
And would soon rot down in the tomb,
Forever o'er, their sway.

The climax came one Sunday morn,
When all the devotees
Had gone to church, now so forlorn,
And lay upon their knees.

Among them was this fierce adept
In philosophic lore,
Who all their tenets had o'erleapt;
They'd win respect no more.

He 'rose from out his seat and pew,
And bid them praying stop,
That he might be allowed a few
Remarks on them to drop.

The minister was so amazed,
He could not say a word;
The congregation, too, was dazed;
And this is what they heard:

"If there's a Christ on high, He will
Avenge upon my head
The heresy I did instill
Into the people, fed

Into their intellect and heart,—
Confound me for my fame,
Condemn me my rebellious part,
And hound me into shame.

If there's a 'Mighty God on high
To hear what now I say
Within these 'sacred' walls, and I
Should here refuse to pray;

Instead him curse into His teeth,
His power Him deny,
Renounce His glory here beneath,
And give Him back the lie,—

Then would He strike me, where I stood,
With lightning on the head,
Reveal in storm His angry mood,
And me with torture wed

Eternally, in hell below,
Me roast in livid flame;
I would if I were God, I know;
I would uphold my fame.

I see you grant me I am right;
Then listen to me well;
And if I tremble in your sight,
I will endure your hell."

He sprang into the pulpit, and,
With courage for his guide,
Raised in the air a fisted hand,
And to the heavens this cried:

"Accursed be Thou, vindictive God,
For all the evil brought
By Thee upon this earthly sod,
For all the error taught

By Thee unto Thy creatures here
Assembled on this earth,

For all the sin, fanatic fear
Thy word has given birth,

For all the blood which Thou hast shed,
Recorded in Thy Writ,
For all the men for Thee are dead,
Crazed martyrs on the spit.

Accursed be Thou for placing hell
Below to torture souls
With fiendish hate and fiery swell
When they have reached their goals.

I call on Thee to answer me
The anti-Christ, if Thou
Existest, to bring misery
And death upon me now.

See, I deny Thee, fear Thee not;
I challenge Thee to strife;
I stake on this th' eternal lot
Of soul in other life."

The blasphemy was out, the church
Was hushed, the people all
Had left assurance in the lurch;
Upon their knees they fall,

And hide their faces in their hands;
The minister had swooned,
The deacons gave no more commands,
The organ was untuned.

The sun smiled in, and never winked,
The heavens remained as blue
As though Armillus ne'er had linked
Fair reason to his view;

There was no thunderbolt to strike
Armillus where he stood;
He was unharmed, unshaken, like
Those in a fearful mood

Of godly vengeance; it ne'er came;
The challenge was refused;
The blasphemy heaped scorn and shame
On Him Whom it abused.

"There is no God!" Armillus cried,
"And I have proved it here;
Go home, and take with sense your side,
Nor stop to waste a tear

On shattered altars, shaken creeds,
But let your every thought
Be to enact but noble deeds,
In reason ever caught.

Your minister lies in a swoon;
What if he swear and foam;
He is a sad and vanquished loon;
Good people all, go home."

They went. The mission was fulfilled
That taught Armillus there;
He had the voice of error stilled;
It ne'er again would dare

To raise too high its voice or head,
Or shout aloud its chaff;
Its power was forever dead:
There was a general laugh.

The challenger of heaven with grace
Bowed out himself, and turned
To other lands and scenes his face,
And there religion spurned

With like success; and when he'd been
The whole wide world him o'er,
He settled down himself to win,
Upon his native shore,

A peaceful climax to his days;
He and his lovely wife,
Now tired of all their early frays,
Determined to make life

A pleasure to each other, and
Their children, on whom spent
They love with kind and lavish hand;
And so the years by went

Until their locks were silvery gray;
They went to sleep one night,
And never did another day
They on this planet sight,

Nor on another; they had passed
Into eternity
Of dusty death, from hellish blast
And heavenly rapture free.

Come shed a tear upon the grave
Of him you have pursued
Through all these pages; that to save,
Were this contemptuous' viewed,—

And many centuries came on,—
I write beyond all time,—
And periods in old age grew wan,
And yet flows on my rhyme.

The human race was at an end,
Lost in a species strange,

The Darwin doctrine to befriend,
Through many eras' range.

And somewhere near the end of all
Things, fell our earth into
The sun, freed from its orbit's thrall,
That livid breast to woo.

And all its sister planets joined
The earth whereto it fell,
From their far distant paths purloined,
In thundering pell-mell.

The mass was melted by the shocks,
And filled the shell within
With boiling liquid, till the rocks
Were melted too, the din

In heaven and hell increasing till
The huge emphyreal shell,
With quaking mounts and mighty thrill,
Into some huge sun fell.

And with it, many shells unknown
To frail astronomy,
On no chart earthly ever shown;
All sphere-life ceased to be.

All space was filled with hydrogen
As it had been of yore,
E'er plants and animals and men
Existed, issue bore.

In infinite time, the infinite space
Contracted into naught,
Despatched and vanished from the face
Of all things, fairly brought

To end. And so all time was done,
The mighty history
At length its final threads had spun;
The huge eternity

Was brought to close. 'Tis writ', the tale;
At end, th' infernal spell;
My pen is dull, my ink is pale;
I bid you all farewell.

THE END OF THE DAWN OF REASON.

THE END



INFERNAL COMEDY.

INFERNAL STATISTICS.

THE SIZE OF "THE INFERNAL COMEDY."

	No. of Stanzas	No. of Lines.
BOOK I. CANTO I.	57	223
II.....	37	148
III.....	38	152
IV.....	41	164
V.....	55	220
VI.....	39	156
Length of Book I.	267	1068

—:0:—

BOOK II. CANTO I.	89	356
II.....	90	360
III.....	99	396
IV.....	108	432
V.....	106	424
VI.....	115	460
Length of Book II.	607	2428

—:0:—

BOOK III. CANTO I.	85	340
II.....	74	296
III.....	81	324
IV.....	84	336
V.....	102	408
VI.....	88	352
Length of Book III.	514	2056

BOOK IV. CANTO I.	138	552
II.....	87	348
III.....	124	496
IV.....	144	576
V.....	79	316
VI.....	72	288
Length of Book IV.	644	2576

—:0:—

BOOK V. CANTO I.	112	448
II.....	121	484
III.....	131	524
IV.....	137	548
V.....	144	576
VI.....	142	568
Length of Book V.	787	3148

—:0:—

LENGTH OF BOOK I.	267	1068
II.....	607	2428
III.....	514	2056
IV.....	644	2576
V.....	787	3148
Length of "The Infernal Comedy."	2819	11,276

TO AMERICA'S CRITICAL AUTHORITIES.

Before you lies a copy of the Advance Edition of **The Infernal Comedy**. First read the preface, then read the work itself, and then judge it. You are earnestly requested to read the work through to the end, and to suspend judgment until you have finished its perusal. The author prays that you may criticize the work at length, in detail, and in all its bearings.

This Advance Edition was published for you. The present form of the poem is its original, crude one. It was printed as fast as it was written. The author desires to profit by your corrections and suggestions in the preparation of the work for the second press. Please pass your judgment upon it, be that judgment what it may, be it harsh or lenient, condemnatory or laudatory, come it from friend or foe.

When the author began this work, he already realized that he could never persuade a publisher to undertake the publication of the same in book form by simply presenting the manuscript for examination. He therefore bethought himself of an original way to reach the publisher's attention. He determined to print the work in the form in which it now lies before you, and to deliver it over to your tender mercies for a verdict. He awaits that verdict now. He intends collecting all criticisms reaching him through the press or by letter, without suppression, abridgment or alteration, and sending his collection of criticisms, together with a copy of the work itself, to every responsible publisher in the country, requesting an offer for the copyright.

The author begs you to aid him in this scheme by sending him your opinion of the present work. If you are a member of the press, he prays that you will be so kind as to send him, by mail, to the address below, a copy of the paper in which your criticism appears. He asks this as a personal favor. You see that he is frank with you. Will you lend a helping hand to enable to carry out his purpose to the end? You will aid him by contributing your criticism to the contemplated collection, be it adverse or favorable.

If you are the bearer of a name already famous in letters, will you consider it below your dignity to extend a friendly word to him?

The book herewith is free to you; nobody else can purchase a copy of the present edition at any price. Copies are sent only to those whose judgment on his work the author thinks worth having. You will consider the receipt hereof an invitation to send your written or printed judgment on "The Infernal Comedy" to

RICHARD GERNER,

No. 4 Eleventh Street,

Hoboken, N. J.





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 018 597 358 A